

# WIRE

FEBRUARY 1986 £1.20 \$2.95 ISSUE 24

## BETTY CARTER

the singer of jazz



JIMMY SMITH

PAUL BLEY

VIENNA ART  
ORCHESTRA

SUN BLUES

JOHN  
ABERCROMBIE



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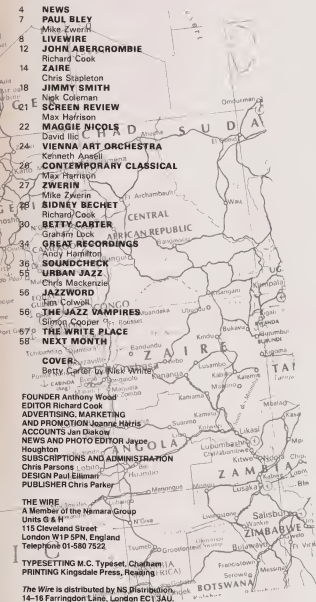
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## NEWS

### IAN STEWART 1938-1985

**THE DEATH** of Ian "Stew" Stewart, aged 47 - pianist and pioneer of the Sixties' blues revival alongside luminaries like Alexis Korner - leaves an aching gap in British music history.

Ian died suddenly following a massive heart attack on Thursday, 12th December, in a hospital outpatients' waiting room where he was attending for a routine ECG test, having been previously announced as fit and well.

Ian's original membership of - and subsequent long association with - The Rolling Stones brought him the occasionally uncomfortable sobriquet of "the Sixth Stone". While Jagger & Co. courted in the spotlight out front, Ian opted for the subdued hues of backstage life, earning an international reputation as a shrewd road manager.

As a result, Ian's pioneering musical contribution to British R&B (something Ian himself would always characteristically brush aside) has been sadly underestimated and often overlooked. Ian will be particularly remembered by his friends, and the many musicians who worked with him, as an individual and original pianist and a life-long devotee of blues music.



His deep affection for the music of the likes of Otis Spann reinforced his determination to perpetuate the blues through his own blues big band Rocket 88. Ian named the band after the Jackie Brenston-like Turner 1951 hit which was, prophetically, to be dubbed later "the first rock & roll record". Not surprisingly, it was Ian who was asked to put together a band and play with Buddy Guy and Junior Wells at the London Blues Festival in 1983.

"Stew" may be gone but his friends will always remember Ian Stewart as a sincere, genuine man and musician - someone for whom the music came first, a man who had no time for posers or pretentiousness.

Chrissie Murray

●Peter Pullman pays tribute to Joe Turner in the next issue.

### Reich and Russell In Major Tours

**TWO MAJOR** figures in modern music both pay a visit to our shores this month. Steve Reich will tour with his Musicians, offering a programme which includes two new works - *New York Counterpoint* and *Sextet* - receiving their UK premieres. The tour includes these dates: London Dominion (29 Jan), Sheffield Octagon Centre (30), Manchester Concert Hall (31), Liverpool Philharmonic (1 Feb), Leicester Haymarket (2), Coventry Warwick Uni Arts Centre (3), Birmingham Aston University (5), Bristol Victoria Rooms (6), Cardiff St David's Hall (7), Oxford Sheldonian Theatre (8), Leeds Civic Theatre (9).

George Russell plays ten concerts with his Orchestra in a rare visit by this modern jazz master. The full list of gigs is: London Logan Hall (26 Feb), Southampton Mountbatten Theatre (27), Manchester Concert Hall (28), Birmingham Triangle Arts Centre (1 Mar), Leicester Haymarket (2), Coventry Warwick Uni Arts Centre (3), Sheffield Leadmill (5), Southport Arts Centre (8), Leeds Civic Theatre (9), Newcastle People's Theatre (12).

### Take Five Move On Up

**THE TAKE FIVE** team of DJs expand their activities further this month. Besides their regular Tuesday-night slot at the Sol Y Sombra in Charlotte Street W1, the chaps are now presenting the Monday jazz night at the Wag Club in Wardour Street W1. They also plan further live sets at their Tuesday venue following the recent appearances by Slim Gaillard and Tommy Chase.

### Jan in Feb at R.A.H.

**LANGUAGE, IMAGE** and action interlink with eroticism, romance, splendour and cruelty in Jan Fabre's monumental *The Power Of Theatrical Madness*, which ICA Theatre are presenting at Royal Albert Hall on 21 February. Music will be provided by the Wim Mertens Ensemble and tickets (£3.50-£8.50) are now on sale at the ICA Box Office. This is to be the last-ever performance of this extraordinary event, which made audiences gasp in its ICA run last March. So don't miss!

### Impulse Competition Results

**FOR ANYONE** still scratching their heads over our Impulse posers in the November issue, here are the answers:

1. *The Artistry Of Freddie Hubbard And Today And Tomorrow*.
2. Abbey Lincoln on Max Roach's *Percussion Bitter Sweet*.
3. Sonny Stitt and Paul Gonsalves.
4. George Russell.

And the lucky *Wire* reader to win a set of DMM Impulse LPs is Anthony Mills of Oldham. Anthony's was the first correct answer we pulled from our mountain of entries.



Steve Arguelles

### Join The Chain Gang

**SEEK OUT** a new musical experience this month by attending one of the gigs by Human Chain, a new duo featuring pianist Django Bates and percussionist Steve Arguelles. The dates are: Exeter (1), Plymouth (2), Dundee (5), Edinburgh (7), Nottingham (12), Stockton on Tees (13), Liverpool (14), Birmingham (16), Southampton (18), Northampton (20), Derby (23). Check local listings for venue details. They also begin recording an LP for *Unamerican Activities* this month.

### Russell Meets Russell

**NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Workers' Educational Association** are mounting a course entitled "Jazz - Luis Russell to George Russell", comprising five meetings in which an illustrated review of the history of jazz construction is undertaken, culminating in a live concert by the George Russell Orchestra (People's Theatre, March 12). The course commences at 7.30 pm on Feb. 12th at the WEA Premises, 51 Grainger Street, Newcastle and includes a half-price concert ticket for course members. Tutor is Chris Yates.

### Reminder

Once again let me remind all those interested in being featured on these pages - All items for inclusion in the MARCH issue should be on my desk **NO LATER THAN FEB 3rd**.

Jayne Houghton

## Club Dates

**SHEFFIELD** Grapes Trippet Lane  
(Feb 2) **Evan Parker/Bass Tone Trap**  
(Feb 16) **Mick Beck Band**  
**COLCHESTER** Essex Uni  
(Feb 8) **Evan Parker**  
(Feb 22) **Makeshift**  
**BIRMINGHAM** Triangle Art Centre  
(Feb 1) **Sonido De Londres**  
(Feb 16) **Human Chain/Django Bates**  
**CHELSTENHAM** Queens Hotel  
(Jan 31) **Don Weller/Bryan Spring**  
(Feb 21) **Joe Lee Wilson/Rod Kelly Quintet**  
**ASTON** Bartons Arms  
(Feb 7) **Alan Skidmore/Guy Barker**  
(Feb 14) **Don Rendell**  
(Feb 21) **Dick Morrissey/Jim Mullen**  
(Feb 28) **Pete King Trio**  
**SHEFFIELD** Leadmill  
(Feb 5) **Ed Jackson/Tom Varner Quartet**  
(Feb 9 lunch) **Louisiana Red**  
(Feb 12) **Stan Tracey Quartet**  
(Feb 19) **Guest Stars**  
**NOTTINGHAM** Old Vic Tavern  
(Feb 5) **John Etheridge/Gary Boyle**  
(Feb 12) **Human Chain**  
(Feb 26) **Jo Ann Kelly**  
**LONDON** South Hill Park Art Centre  
(Feb 4) **Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues Band**  
(Feb 11) **Bill Le Sage Trio with Art Themen**  
(Feb 15) **Sonido De Londres**  
(Feb 25) **Music of Ellington/Honeywell**  
**LONDON** Barbican Centre  
(Feb 2 lunch) **Eggy Leys Hotshots**  
(Feb 9 \* ) **Keith Nichols Jazz Quintet**  
(Feb 16 \* ) **Beale St Jazz Band**  
(Feb 23 \* ) **El Dorado**  
**LONDON** Hundred Club  
(Feb 7) **Guest Stars/African Connection**  
(Feb 14) **Memphis Slim**  
(Feb 21) **Paz/Tunji/Mosquitoes**  
(Feb 28) **Big Town Playboys/Sayinoh**  
**NORWICH** Premises Art Centre  
(Feb 7) **Louisiana Red**  
(Feb 20) **Jazz/Improvised Night**  
(Feb 22) **Kahondo Style**  
(Feb 27) **District Six**  
**MANCHESTER** Band On The Wall:  
(Feb 6) **Pete Martin Group & Gary Boyle**  
(Feb 11) **Supercombo**  
(Feb 13) **Karl Heinz Miklin Trio**  
(Feb 18) **Waduku**  
(Feb 20) **Morrissey-Mullen**  
(Feb 25) **District Six**  
(Feb 27) **Tenor Tonie**  
**DARLINGTON** Arts Centre:  
(Feb 5) **Harry Beckett/Dave Tyas Trio**  
(Feb 12) **Don Rendell/Chris Bolton Trio**  
(Feb 19) **Munch Manship Quartet**  
(Feb 26) **Pete King/Bob Peacock Trio**  
**BANBURY** Mill Arts Centre  
(Feb 5) **Monthly Jazz Special**  
**BANBURY** Moat House  
(Feb 4) **Danny Moss/Jeannie Lamb**  
(Feb 18) **Tenorame**  
**BILSTON** The Trumpet  
Mondays: **Reg Kierle**  
Tuesdays: **The Mike Peck Modern Jazz Quartet**  
Wednesdays: **Dutch Lewis and Jack McKechnie Jazz Band**  
(Pacific Jazz Band 1st Wednesday each month)  
Thursdays: **Ray Barnes Trio with guests**



Memphis  
Slim  
rocks  
the  
joint

**Fridays: Swing Parade**  
Saturdays: **Ray Foxley Trio alternating with the Ray Barnes Trio with guests**  
Sunday lunch: **The Steve Pacitto Quintet**  
Sunday evenings: **The Bill Dickerton Jazz Band**

**ASTON** University Hall  
(Feb 5) **Steve Reich**  
**DERBY** Brownes  
(Feb 2) **Expressions**  
(Feb 9) **Steve Franklin Group**  
(Feb 16) **Dave Brown Quintet**  
(Feb 23) **Human Chain**  
**DERBY** Phase Six Derby College  
(Feb 6) **Gunter Christmann**  
**DUDLEY** The Bull & Bladder Jazz Club  
(Mondays) **Jazz night**  
**DUDLEY** Town Hall  
(Feb 8) **The Herb Miller Orchestra**  
**GAINSBOROUGH** Trinity Art Centre  
(Feb 21) **3 Space in Performance**  
**GAINSBOROUGH** Kingfisher Club  
(Feb 7) **George Melly**  
**ASTON** Barton Arms  
(Feb 7) **Skidmore/Barker**  
(Feb 14) **Don Rendell**  
(Feb 21) **Morrissey Mullen**  
(Feb 28) **Pete King**  
**OLDBURY** Hen & Chicken  
(Feb 2) **Garry Allcock Allstars**

**COVENTRY** Art Centre  
(Feb 7) **Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues Band**  
(Feb 10) **Stan Tracey**  
**COVENTRY** Prompt Corner Bar  
(Feb 18) **Guest Stars**  
**LEICESTER** Braunstone  
(Feb 18) **Stan Sulzmann Steam Brass Band**  
**LEICESTER** The Cooler  
(Feb 3) **Evan Parker**  
**LICHFIELD** Kings Head  
(Feb 1) **Ken Ingrams Jazz Kings**  
(Feb 8) **New Orleans Express**  
(Feb 15) **Eagle Jazz Band**  
(Feb 22) **Bob Oliver Jazz Band**  
**LOUGHBOROUGH** Burleigh College  
(Feb 11) **Steve Franklin Band**  
**MILTON KEYNES** The Stables  
(Feb 7) **George Masso**  
(Feb 8) **Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues Band**  
(Feb 14) **John Dankworth Quintet**  
(Feb 21) **Terry Smith Blues Band**  
(Feb 28) **Alan Elsdon Band**  
**NEWARK** The Bowling Green  
(Feb 18) **Steve Franklin Band**  
**NORTHAMPTON** Art Centre  
(Feb 6) **Kintone**  
(Feb 13) **The GB Blues Co**  
(Feb 20) **Human Chain**  
**NORTHAMPTON** Derngate Jazz Club  
(Feb 2) **Owen Bryce Band**  
(Feb 9) **Tad Newton Jazzfriends**  
(Feb 16) **Blue Rhythm Band**  
(Feb 21) **NYJO**  
(Feb 23) **Zenith Hot Stompers**  
**NOTTINGHAM** Bonington Theatre  
(Feb 20) **George Melly**  
**SHEFFIELD** Leadmill  
(Sunday lunch Feb 2) **Stems**  
( \* Feb 9) **Madison Blues**  
( \* Feb 16) **John Taylor Trio**  
**STAFFORD** Globe  
(Feb 2) **Martinique Jazz Band**  
(Feb 9) **Frank Nichols/Sheila Scott**  
(Feb 16) **Storeyville**  
(Feb 23) **Swingshift**  
**WORCESTER** Georgian Wine Bar  
(Sunday lunches) **Quadrant 5**

## Six of the Best (Again)

**DISTRICT SIX** have the following tour dates:

February 22 **EKETER, Arts Centre**  
23 **PLYMOUTH, Mayflower Sailing Club**  
25 **MANCHESTER, Band On The Wall**  
26 **HULL, Piper Club**  
27 **NORWICH, Premises Arts Centre**  
28 **CAMBRIDGE, Man In The Moon**



JANE Houghton



PAUL BLEY  
 RAMBLIN' WITH THE DISAPPEARING MAN



JAN MAC BIMALUX

THE PIANIST WHO TRIES TO FILL THE SPACES NOBODY ELSE DOES.  
 WHEN IT SNOWS, HE STAYS AT HOME. BY MIKE ZWERIN.

**AFTER INTERVIEWING** Carla Bley, a female journalist who said she is also an amateur musician asked her to recommend a teacher. Carla replied: "Why don't you marry Paul Bley?"

Paul Bley, who wrote songs with former wife Carla and has also been married to and worked with Annette Peacock, is not easy to find, although he does seem to be easy to marry. He splits his time between a farm in upstate New York, a Greenwich Village studio, several houses in Florida belonging to his in-laws - he's married again - and four-month European tours. He only works in the States when he gets his price, which he keeps high because he doesn't like to go out all that much anyway.

He appears to disappear before your very eyes and ears. Not that he slinks exactly, and he is certainly not anonymous. You would in fact describe him as "grand" rather than "large" - "imposing" not "clumsy". But there's a transparency that provokes frequent double-takes. His place suddenly empties and, presto, he pops up over on the other side. You might think you're talking to yourself but be careful what you say because it's being taken seriously. Then when he speaks, you start out by repeating "Sorry?" asking him to repeat because he mumbles in ambiguous depths punctuated by long pauses for reflection. Finally you give up, accepting the rich texture of the voice as the message, hoping to find something verbal on the cassette.

You find a man talking about how much he likes to disappear: "With all those video channels plugged into your house - old movies, documentaries, a jazz channel - everything on the tube, it's pretty hard to leave it. Especially if you're living in the mountains and it's snowing."

Playing a lot of solo acoustic piano lately, he's been disappearing into abstract, intellectual, totally improvised explorations of what he calls "areas" or "places" which are everything you always expected from Keith Jarrett but rarely got. An "area" can be an ostinato, a tempo, a feeling. Bley says that he "can play a good place for a year or two".

He was born in Montreal in 1932, studied at Juilliard, played with Mingus, Ornette, Don Cherry and Jimmy Giuffrè, was a key member of the cooperative Jazz Composers Guild and in the mid-60s accompanied Sonny Rollins: "At the time Sonny was legendary for playing long tunes. If there was a three-hour set it would be one three-hour tune. Sonny would play for an hour and fifteen minutes. How do you follow a one-hour-and-fifteen-minute Sonny Rollins solo? You can't play four choruses. You're going to have to go on for at least half an hour. That raised a lot of questions of form in my mind, because repetition is anathema to me."

**BUSINESSMAN BLEY** was born in the 70s with Improvising Artists, Inc (IAI), which released 20 albums. (He has played on almost 100 albums, including the classic *Savoy Footloose*, with songs by Carla and himself.) IAI also shot more than a hundred hours of live concert videos, which "I'm sitting on. Right now they are too easy to pirate. I'm waiting for the video disc to be developed. They will be sold cheap enough so that people will not have any interest in copying them. Right now you put out a video it's like giving everybody a free master."

The company is "inactive" because "I got tired of dealing with OPC".

Sorry?

"Other people's careers. I'm not sure an artist should work on other people's careers. But it is an education to find out what goes on on the other side of the desk. I think a lot of musicians are unnecessarily paranoid about record companies. They often think they are getting cheated when they are not. They don't understand the numbers."

There is a defensive tone here. IAI had problems with 'unnecessarily paranoid' musicians, who attacked it on ethical and even legal grounds. Anyway, it was time to move on. This acoustic piano connoisseur was an early synthesizer experimenter. Last spring he played a Yamaha DX-7 with Steve Swallow, John Scofield and Barry Altschul at New York's Lush Life club. He approached it with the same intellectual preparation he approaches life: "If you work in a genre you have to study the history of that genre. Solo piano has its history, electric groups have their history. I always try to find out what's been done, or rather where there's something left undone, and try and fill the spaces."

He never practises: "The question is what to play. Practising doesn't lead to that. Thinking about it leads to it. If you haven't yet thought of what to play, how can you practise it? If you practise scales and arpeggios and Mozart you'll come on stage and play that. There's no preparation for real-time performance except real-time performance."

"The future is predestined by all the moves you've made so far. Musically, at least, I don't think about the future at all. It's got to be a surprise. The other day I heard a tape of a concert I'd done two days earlier and, you know, I didn't recognize the pianist. That was wonderful."

## LIVE WIRE

## ■ STEVE LACY London Riverside Studios

**THE MAN** with the straight horn wanders on and sets to with such informality that we maybe don't quite connect with his first casually revolved phrase until he's mullied it over a couple of times. The existential distance between (lived) body and (voiced) soul is for the moment put on one side.

The performance is in three sections: solo, duet, trio. He's made this kind of combinatorial shuffling a brand mark – I can't think of another writer outside classical serialism for whom the names of the numbers of co-conspirators (two or five or six) is made to seem so present. Ensure, he seems to have said to himself at one time, that nothing relevant or fruitful is ignored. By them (smiles quietly out at us) or by me. So he toys, in the first piece, with the idea of fluidity, puts together a bouquet of liquid and languorous acrobatics, and places, in its centre, a passage of perfectly played and motionless unconnected notes (if pop had an opposite, this manner of play would be it), which twitches after suitable meditation back into motion. Or turns something very like that old mouth-harp double trainwhistle into pedal-point in a piece that not only signalled his relaxed mood, but caught his architectural intelligence at its sweetest.

The trio, "Tips", stretches this to its precarious limits. A project that ought by rights to collapse under the combined weight of faintly precious concept and impossibly fragmented structure, this longish piece is punctuated by fourteen composed miniatures, Irene Aebi singing (and Lacy and Steve Potts on alto accompanying) just that many of Georges Braque's artistic 'tips', admired and collected by Lacy from the painter-savant's notebooks. Without the deliberately deflating title, and the almost hypnotic telepathy the three demonstrate, it wouldn't work – but somehow the blend of gentle informality and highly posed theatrics turns even the fragility of its success into an asset.

But most striking, because most surprising, was the duet with Potts, "Points", where the two horns curled into each other's trajectory so tightly it became impossible to guess or calculate just who was playing what. A piece of mind-reading that called to thought (of all people) the original twins in first astounding companionship, Cherry-Coleman Ltd – listeners couldn't believe that they were coming out of the *tunes* together, quite apart from the rest of it. "Points" has tight unison discord tunes of similarly thorny complexity, but it's the free dervish-whirling that falls between that's so astonishing: two independent minds and mouths somewhere fusing into indissolubly bonded sound.

Mr Cook has suggested that the man gives himself over to subjectivity: certainly tonight he seemed to be allowing light good humour to mellow his customary rigorous strangeness, returned often to melody and to the lower, broader and

warmer reaches of his horn. But, of course, that might just be me. Braque's final Tip, translated by Steve Lacy, is: "With age, Art and Life become one." All of tonight's show seemed to be considering that thought.

Mark Sinkov

## ■ TERJE RYPDAL TRIO Edinburgh Queen's Hall

**IF TERJE RYPDAL's** rock roots have never lain far beneath the surface of his playing, they have generally been integrated into his characteristic ECM chamber-jazz mode. Listening to his new Trio on stage, it is instantly evident that his music has taken a dramatic lurch in direction. Sadly, for a player of his ability, that direction is backwards. Rypdal vacillated throughout the set between what I came to think of as his Peter Green (or, worse, Dave Gilmour) mode and his Jimmy Page mode (the riffs from "Chaser" or "Ambiguity" would not sound out of place on Led Zeppelin II), while Audun Kleive and Bjorn Kjellemyr provided a pedantic, lacklustre support which their work elsewhere suggests may be down to the restrictions imposed by following their leader's current path.

There were odd passages of lucid, atmospheric playing that recalled what Rypdal can do, and served to make the rest of the set all the more inexplicable. The Trio reserved their best work for more reflective material like "Ornen" or "Once Upon A Time," with Kjellemyr sounding a much more imaginative player on upright than on electric bass, while Kleive made his most effective contributions when he abandoned drums for synthesizer. If these pieces sometimes lacked direction, the real horrors occurred when they launched into the Page mode, complete with thrashing drums, a thumping, leaden bass line, and flashy riffing (the PA mercifully refused to work, reducing the battering to bearable levels).

There were moments when I couldn't quite believe what I was hearing, time-shifted fifteen years back to records I no longer confess to having owned. The problem is not that he is drawing more overtly on rock elements, but rather the outmoded nature of the specific forms he has chosen. If Rypdal, for whatever unimaginable reasons, wants to play this way, then good luck to him, but let's not be fooled. He is imitating rituals already empty of all but a tired nostalgia, and no amount of technique is going to breathe life into them.

Kenny Mathieson

## ■ DOMINIC ALLDIS London Purcell Room

**DOMINIC ALLDIS** stays this side of cocktail prissiness by the width of his phenomenal keyboard technique. For a pianist in his early 20s, he's got a lot going for him. And a lot more, I'd choose to believe, than was on show at this rather odd affair.

Over the last year or so, Alldis has been house pianist at Pizzini on the Park. Residencies of that sort usually leave the chops a little ragged, as you try to drown out the knives and forks. However, apart from a preference for f to ff, Alldis has retained an elaborate recitalist's style that made the jazz half of his performance seem curiously magisterial and earnest. In two shortish sets, he ranged from a selection of standards – "Caravan", "My Foolish Heart", a thumping "Ornithology" to finish, the best thing he did – to a series of improvisations which used an electronic sequencer for delay, echo, distort and so on, a battery of effects that never quite gelled into anything memorable.

The last but one piece, announced as being "in the manner of certain American minimalist composers" seemed more dependent on some very uncertain minimalists and verged on the embarrassing. But then along came "Ornithology" to put things right. And, for an encore, a reading of "Moon River" that was remarkably reminiscent (like him, hate him) of Keith Jarrett, who's been known to send 'em home happy with "Somewhere

NICK WHITE



Over The Rainbow". The comparison doesn't flatter Alldis. His technique is genuinely remarkable and the difference between the stiff-necked early pieces and the relaxed flow of the finish and encore suggested that there were a lot of nerves in play that can only decrease over time.

I've been tipping three-year-olds and teenage inside-rights for long enough, only to watch them plouthing in fourth at Lingfield or playing for Hereford United. So I'll spare Dominic Alldis more than the certainty that he'll go far and do well.

Brian Morton



## ■ SECOND FESTIVAL OF JAZZ AND IMPROVISED MUSIC Thessaloniki

**LAST YEAR** the emphasis was on duos and the venue a funky porno cinema. This time, trios were predominant and the venue a swanky uptown movie theatre. If progress continues at this rate, the 20th Macedonian Jazz Fest will showcase big bands in the sports stadium. The audience is mysterious. Who are these young people who turn out in their hundreds – and why is their enthusiasm not reflected in the general run of the town's entertainment? (Six jazz gigs a year, if they're lucky.) And why are the Greek groups so awful? They line up in all their interchangeable timidity, blandly dressed in mail order catalogue casual gear and gingerly try to play like Dave Sanborn or Pat Metheny. Their terror is so palpable it begins to rub off on the listeners. Iskra (no relation), Da Capo, The Notes – these were bands that filled the lobby in double quick time. Five years ago there were two Greek improvisers who mattered. Then, pianist Sakis

the music's focus, offset against an indeterminate mumble from their colleagues. Daunik's doctored alto (a length of piping is inserted into the neck) was a sound source for fuzzed blasts of energy, and Sakis' piano interior work (can't think of anybody who does it better) an apt complement.

Floridis appeared with a better band but seemed to want to play down his own contribution to it, presumably in case he should be accused of programming the festival just to showcase his own abilities. His partners responded by checking their own garrulity and volume levels. Quiet music, then. A perfect setting for Phil Wachsmann who thrives in the zone between sound and no sound and it seemed to suit German bassist Hans Schneider, a sensitive, precise player.

Peter Kowald, recently returned from an extended domicile in New York, spoke about problems of readjustment to European rhythmic sensibilities. What we'd all denied for years was true, he said. Europeans, especially drummers, seemed so damned jittery. He got around this problem in his own trio by featuring the mighty Louis Moholo on drums, Mr

(arco work particularly stunning) and Moholo supercharged the performance with adrenalin shocks. One sequence, when he and Banks leapt into an impromptu staccato vocal duet, was absolutely electric. This is a group that should stay together.

The trios of Dave Holland and Paul Motian both revealed the benefits of endurance and hard work. Holland's was the more viscerally thrilling. Motian's the more seductive. On alto and soprano Steve Coleman, with Holland, impressed as the most Birdlike of the newer players. His line has tremendous agility, is light, stinging, accurate. Tenorist Joe Lovano, with Motian, is a grainier, big-toned player who has foregone self-expression to illuminate Motian's unique, folksy charts. Both trios combine a sense of jazz history with adventurousness. I heard the view expressed that the Motian trio demonstrated more "heart" and "humanity", which may be true, but I don't see how anybody could deny the cutting edge of Holland's virtuosity and the sheer hard brilliance of his band. He, Coleman and drummer "Smitty" Smith are playing near jazz's highest peak.



In triptych: Potts, Lacy, Aebi

Papadimitriou and saxophonist/clarinetist Floros Floridis played together. No longer, their paths have diverged, yet they still seem the only two who measure up on the international scale.

This year, Sakis fielded a quartet completed by French saxophonist Daunik Lazro and a Greek "rhythm section" who could have stayed at home. Drummer Lefteris Agouridakis, despite a gigantic kit including twin bass drums, congas, tuned flower pots and you-name-it also suffered from the peculiarly Greek fear of being heard. Lazro and Papadimitriou became

Consistency himself, the original unflappable improviser. On piano, Curtis Clark, the American resident in Amsterdam. The trio's music was given a tremendous additional impetus by dancer Cheryl Banks, formerly of the Sun Ra troupe, and turned into a vitally alive kind of theatre. Ideas flashed back and forth, the lightning reflexes of Banks' body echoed in the music and vice versa. Everybody was terrific. It was an education to hear Clark's playing fully exposed after years of catching him behind Murray, Priest etc. I'd never heard Kowald playing so well

Combining roots with a vision of the future or even of contemporaneity can be a problem for those seeded in unfortunate corners of the world. I can see why Ernst Ludwig Petrowsky tries to fuse free jazz with high-volume electric guitar and East German folk songs but I can't find the level of sociological sympathy that would let me enjoy it. To be blunt, I've seldom heard anything uglier. Objectively, was East German scat singer Uschi Brünig (with Petrowsky) worse than Bulgarian scat singer Suzzana Erova (with Coltrane imitator Vesselin Nikolov)? Not being a

scat man I wouldn't say.

And then there was Derek Bailey. At the side of the stage, Humair was bleating about Bailey's lack of stagecraft. "You've got to present this music to the audience. You can't just sit down and play."

Traditionally Bailey has left the business of being ingratiating to other people. In Greece, Steve Noble's job included "entertainment", what I took to be a guided tour through other people's styles – touch of Bennink (football rattle), Lovens (musical saw), Beresford/Day (baby toys) – as well as music. On drums he was strong, strong enough to divert the maestro into interaction, and away from his system of harmonics, rhythm patterns and arpeggios. My hat is off to Bailey the Polish Musician, yet still I like that wider aggressive edge that he unveils more rarely.

In all, I think I was pining for a bit more free jazz row. But I hear that Peter Brotzmann and Sonny Sharrock are now playing together... Next year, Floros?

Steve Lake

**■DEREK BAILEY  
■LONDON  
■IMPROVISERS  
ENSEMBLE  
■PETER CUSACK AND  
CLIVE BELL  
■AMM  
■UBIQUITY  
ORCHESTRA  
London Soho Poly**

MS: There's not much point in fixing for ever the order of performance, is there? When everything else is lost or untransmittable?

RC: People always question my orders, anyway.

MS: I was thinking we ought to deal with it historically. Treat it as a rapprochement with preterite sound, the lost, the ignored, the despised, the noises history (must) miss, the uncomprehended mutters of the myriad dispossessed. Fair enough?

RC: What?

MS: So what would you say about AMM? A beginning, or the end? Something that comes before emotion, or collectively in flight from it?

RC: I'd say it was more an emotion that's been immobilized, or is being replayed – detached – in a kind of slow motion (I've never heard them play fast, anyway).

MS: Something to do, in their case, with the fascination for Totality. There were three kids next to me, in black and DMs, swaying and giggling and crooning and writhing. The perfect audience, they'd never seen them before, couldn't believe their luck, I think. Old lags like you and me can get jaded, let's not forget.

RC: We should recognize how unique their idea of ensemble is. They subsume the self so completely. All those ambitions for collectivism – surely they'll never be so closely realized as here. It's just...

MS: Exhausting slowness of event, the final crawling edge of escape from pre-set structure, obsession-addiction in the slightest variation to be found in these long slow waves of sound: a world intoxicated with its own emptiness. Bit like being on heroin.

RC: Or undergoing starvation in a dream.

MS: Well, is intoxication something you grow out of after a season, or does it transform itself and wind deeper and deeper into your system? Keith Rowe is like a lab technician, his obscure care is hypnotic.

RC: Dunno, really. I mean, these players don't just do AMM – AMM only plays a few times every year now. It's an irregular habit. If they played all the time, they'd have probably refined the music to a vanishing point by now.

MS: Same thing with John Russell's guitar, in the London Improvisers' Ensemble. Is there an SME school of improvisation?

RC: Sort of. Do you mean sound, time or motion?

MS: No, what I mean is that these, um, classical set-ups make the older and bolder instruments (like sax or trombone) seem played out, or used up. They're there, they join in, but they're too Big and Clumsy to work at this level.

RC: Well, there was a chamber sort of feel to the later SME. Maybe it was meant to start at an intimate level in order to compensate for the usual wild disorder.

MS: Because Russell and Marcio Mattos' cello deal with the shadows and angles of music, the folds in its skin, the lived immediacy of performance: and no body with friction, gravity, fissured mortality. The Jazz Voices are too strong, repeatable cartoon gestures.

RC: Jazz violin goes back at least as far as Joe Venuti!

MS: It's to do with whether or not the music has a Platonic ideal that it echoes, that you really hear. Whether you ignore extraneous sounds, or include them.

RC: Define "sounds".

MS: Well, if it's a limit to music, it isn't a last phase. There's always room to turn elsewhere. Music doesn't have Final Solutions.

RC: No, but you keep rubbing up against boundaries that create a real-time finality. Like splitting reds, the power being switched off, people falling asleep. At least nobody slept through L.I.E.

MS: The rehabilitation of the things that fall between, or behind. Derek Bailey always sounds to me to be clambering about in the skeleton or scaffolding of some song we all know but never hear – always finding new ways of not quite playing it.

RC: An ingenious try, Mark, but incorrect, I think. His two solos were more like pieces of a music we think we might know. I never hear songs or even ideas about songs – just the tangle of music. Funny, he's been playing this for so long you'd think he'd have wriggled out of any "freedom" he could have found.

MS: The Ubiquity Orchestra are mostly about the disorganized fun of big band rehearsals. As opposed to the formal requirements of correct public performances. I s'pose they're called Ubiquity because everyone's all over the place all the time.

RC: More like the hunger to slam everything in. I told you Coltrane still counted for a lot!

MS: If you played some old-and-tried lick in the L.I.E., its resonance would shake the whole thing to pieces. In a big band you can do that.

RC: Provided the rest of them are playing at the same time. I heard Albert Mangelsdorff play "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" in a quiet bit of Globe Unity and that *did* shake it all to pieces.

MS: They fell too easily into sections. Like Brass and Wind, and what have you. It's just a matter of listening. When you know that people playing are listening to the silences of those laying out, then it comes together.

RC: Mmm. Not a real 'ubiquity'.

MS: Is there a post-Beresford school?

RC: Of what?

MS: Well, performers who don't hiss and turn on their heel when you tell them you dig Madonna?

RC: Who says that, apart from me?

MS: Preterite includes the despised. Chart Pop is despised by Real Musicians. Post-Beresford is the world that includes unReal Musicians.

RC: Ah, you mean the wise amateur, or the naive auteur. That can only lead to...

MS: Rehabilitation of Tunes! Steve Noble played a tempered scale by throwing tuned metal pipes across the floor.

RC: Do you think he meant to, though?

MS: A Love Supreme includes everything. Not just old things, not just affairs with Structure, or Tradition, or A Particular

## LIVE WIRE

Instrument. Epiphanies can't be planned, and they can't be excluded.

RC: Yes, but you can create conditions where they're likely to erupt. Part of the problem with this week was the environment – Soho Poly a week before Christmas isn't my idea of any improvised nativity. I know improvisers are supposed to love playing in these conditions, but why is it always so institutionalized?

MS: Shamans are ambisexual, one side mage, one side muse. Jacques Lacan and Michele Montrelay in one body, that's what love's about. Nothing is intrinsically vital – but every irrelevant speck of dirt has its own animist godling. We should want to rehabilitate everything.

RC: Mark, what are you talking about?

MS: OK, OK, all I'm saying is that Clive Bell's and Peter Cusack's night was the most entertaining, it threw up more things into the air, it didn't rely on expectations.

RC: I think I'd roughly know what to expect with Peter and Clive. Depends (as Lester Bowie observed) on what you know, heh heh.

MS: A didgeroo doo, an impromptu version of *Stimmung* a replay of Guo Yi and Guo Yue's Chinese folk-flute triumph at WOMAD.

RC: Alright, so I don't know what went on in that!

MS: Well, there isn't any point in rehearsing it all for you now, you had to be there. It'd be like unfolding a one-to-one map of Africa. The old problem of identity and repetition – if two things are identical, then they're the same thing. Memory has to miss bits out, history enforces silence, things can't be right without things wrong.

RC: Your conjunctions grow vague. I'd make a play for memory inventing whatever it couldn't focus on very clearly – which means that everybody's history is, thank goodness, different from everybody else's. Which means – erm, what does it mean?

MS: Best would be when noise and signal just stop setting each other off. Can you hear, goatfoot Pan whispering: "Values are just word-frames, noise comes before all that, signal collectively flees it. There is no good, there is no bad, Richard. Go for it!"

RC: That's the Devil talking.

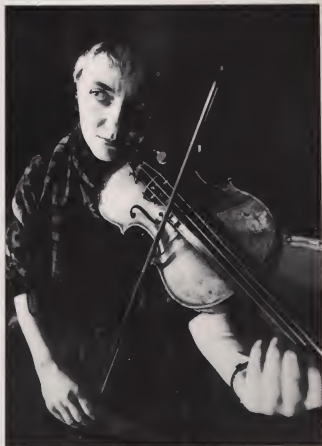
MS: Music belongs to the Devil, the eternal losers win out in the end. That's all there is, tenorman.

RC: Duck, you sucker.

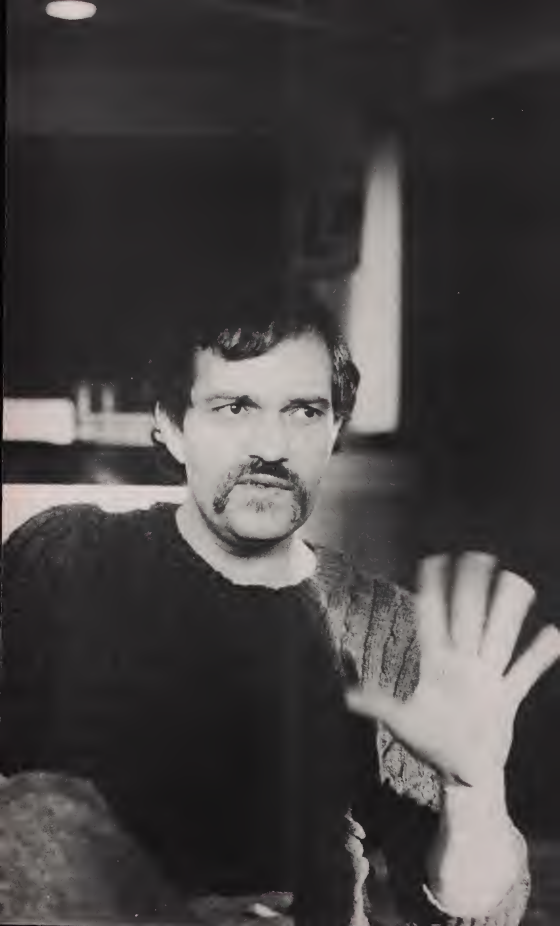
This dialogue was improvised by Mark Sinker and Richard Cook



Bailey plugs into the cosmos



Sylvia Hallitt, blower of Ubiquity



## JOHN ABERCROMBIE

# A 'TIMELESS' AMERICAN IN EUROPE

## THE GUITARIST TALKING IN LONDON TO RICHARD COOK

IS THE guitar a fallen instrument?

"Mmmm," murmurs John Abercrombie. This is a tough way to start. The man is tired, after all, locked into the European circuit of flight-hotel-gig-coffee shop-flight. He lights a throatbusting American cigarette and thinks about it.

"A lot's being done with the synthesizer, and a lot's happening on acoustic guitar again, but the electric guitar seems to be disappearing a bit. I guess that's true.

"I'm still playing electric a lot, but I think the synthesizer affords so many possibilities for sound and expression. If a guitar player's into that at all then you naturally want to use those possibilities. You can sound like a violin player if you want to. A lot of your fantasies can come true."

Did Wes Montgomery fantasize about synthesizers? Ouch! Let's go easy on this excellent player: Abercrombie has been making thoughtful, prickly and decidedly individual guitar music for many years now, and a flirtation with the electronic side of things hardly calls the 'sell-out' clause into operation on the man's talent. Even so, a synth doesn't ever sound like a violin to me. It sounds like a synthesizer.

"Not One of the reasons I like it is—I'm not trying to play a guitar-synthesizer like a guitar. It doesn't respond like a normal guitar—it's screwed up, doesn't work that well. It's slow. You can play a phrase and some of the notes come out later. Which means the instrument's not perfect, which I kind of like.

"It's a separate instrument. You can think more orchestrally on it. There's so many possibilities. The danger is that everybody will end up sounding the same. You have to really experiment with the sounds and organize it in a way that'll bring yourself out of it."

It's Abercrombie's sound on guitar that makes me wish he wouldn't even think about gadgetry. He gets a tone that defines all those liquid, lyrical etc adjectives that the electric guitar has almost forsaken in favour of speed, blisters and impressive ugliness. At his most assured, Abercrombie gives the illusion of floating while picking notes with scientific precision. It gives his rhapsodic ideas a rare level of substance.

"I just did a record for ECM that's a combination of synth-guitar, guitar and acoustic. For me it's all new, and I'm trying to find my voice on it. Synthesizers—well, when I hear Jan Hammer play a synthesizer, I know it's him. Most of the rest is supermarket pabulum. But there's only a few people on any instrument who are totally individual."

**SINGULARITY** IS one of John

Abercrombie's clearest virtues. On an instrument where cloning is as widespread as Japanese Strats, he's one of the few who sound like nobody else. Like many, he came up through the more violent, rockier climes of jazz-rock, the confused state of

the early 70s, and most of us first noticed him on the quartet album *Friends*, out in 1972 and issued here on the budget Virgin label Caroline.

In fact, the exhilarating, superbly performed tear-ups on that record were a little misleading. When his *Timeless* debut for ECM emerged, the fuzzed mayhem of a tune like "Red And Orange" was twinned with a discreet ballad strain that remains deeply affecting. His two acoustic duets with keyboardist Hammer in "Love Song" and "Remembering" are still some of the loveliest music in the ECM catalogue—sustere reflections on sun-flecked melodies, intelligent mood music that's extended in the trios of "Ralph's Piano Waltz" and "Timeless"—themes which Abercrombie still plays with his duo partner Ralph Towner.

There was more proof of his range in the two Gateway albums with Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. A shy ballad like "Sing-Song" mixed with the improvised thrash of "Unshielded Desire" and the amiably funky "Back Woods Song", where it seemed the guitarist had a new idea at every swivel of the rhythm.

"The first Gateway album?" he remembers. "That one's pretty bizarre. Ten years ago I was pretty wild then myself, anyway. In my life I was pretty crazy. I've calmed down a lot and I don't feel I have to prove myself as such. I can control what I'm doing on guitar now. I used to just plug in a fuzzbox and see what would happen."

Might that not be more exciting?

"Not for me. I can be excited by quiet things. The way I played earlier, things stuck out like a knife out of water. With a synthesizer I'm getting more abrasive again. It's brought back some of those earlier qualities, although it's going to be more lyrical too."

Abercrombie's big pale eyes are the only remarkable things about the round, rather ragged little figure who's sitting with us in an airy hotel lounge. It's a cold, sharp day, but John hasn't ventured further than the coffee shop today. Isolated for now from his playing companion Towner, he seems a bit swallowed by his surroundings; together they work a conversational double act almost as sharp as their playing. Abercrombie has a good deadpan comedian inside him: when a member of last night's audience let their watch alarm bleep during a quiet moment (before "Timeless"!), the guitarist wryly checked his own timepiece.

But let's get down to something more mundane. How does a working musician like Abercrombie organize a working year?

"I get on the telephone, call my trio and find out when they're available. Then I call agents and say could you start looking for some work for me. In the meantime, I hope the phone'll ring and somebody'll call me about a gig in Boston, maybe, or a recording... the other part of it's chance. The rest of the time you stay home and

practise."

"There's just not enough work in America," he reflects. "For some of the very successful ones, like Chick Corea, there's no problem. But for me—well, if they have a choice of hiring me or Chick Corea for a college concert, they'll hire him. Or Pat Metheny. It's very different there—they think George Benson's jazz."

AS a session player, Abercrombie is a neglected talent. He has a knack of finding supportive, decorative fills for other players which still have substance of their own, and he's a master of atmosphere. Check his contributions to Enrico Rava's cloudy, unforgettable "Blancanoso" or to the ballad book on some of Jack DeJohnette's albums.

"I don't get many calls. In the old days—well, the 70s—I'd get lots of calls for bizarre little records. And I did a lot of sideman work for ECM. But I don't get many calls in New York. I have a stamp on me now as a certain kind of player. If someone wants to make a commercial sort of jazz record and needs a guitarist, they wouldn't call on me."

"I talk to studio musicians and they say there's not many record dates these days. Most of the calls they get are for commercials and jingles. You ask—what did you do today? They say—well, I did the Ford commercial today, Coca-Cola..."

Abercrombie says he'll stick with ECM, the company which has released most of his work, but I hope he'll find a more challenging context soon: his last few albums have been impeccable and supine affairs that lack some of the adventure of his earlier music. How does he evaluate the ECM polish?

"Sometimes, yeah, you can get recording so good, such beautiful digital reverb, that anything'll sound good, even someone crashing pots and pans around in the kitchen. Technology can enhance something that's not really happening. But you can hear through the production. If the music's good, the production quality won't matter unless it's really bad. I don't know, I feel yin and yang about it."

As, I suppose, do we all. In the day of dull fretboard technowizards, though, I'm grateful that a player of Abercrombie's abstruse skills has a label on his side. But how does he deal with the real cost of fame—the guitar bore? He chuckles.

"Sure, that's part of it. You're always hit with a ton of questions. I had a group with Richie Beirach and one night we were doing a gig in San Francisco. And he said, I see there's a lot of your fans in the audience tonight. I said, what do you mean? He said, they're the guys sitting in the first two rows with the bolts coming out of their necks and the stitches in their foreheads.

"They're the bolts, but they're the people who are buying your records and are interested in your music. And I remember when I was a bolt too!"



## CHRIS STAPLETON VISITS KINSHASA AND TAKES THE LOCAL HEARTBEAT WITH FRANCO, TABU LEY AND EMENEYA

AS IT'S Zaire, you expect music. Instead I get a 90-minute wait until my bag crawls out onto the airport conveyor belt, under a lopsided portrait of President Mobutu Sese Seko. The crowd is enormous. So are the suitcases. One breaks open, spilling a fresh rumba onto the floor. It is followed by a caga with dog and a notice that reads "Bonjour, Je M'Appelle Kim".

"You're here for the music?" says a dejected English businessman as we get into the taxi. His Swiss companion, sweating slightly behind executive glasses, is equally staggered. "Don't go out at night," he says. Then "Don't take photographs in the street". And "Don't leave your valuables in the hotel".

It's three am in Kinshasa. The despondent duo drop at the large, white Hotel Intercontinental. "Cheese Week 23-30 January," announces a banner.

That leaves me and the driver. "Matongay," I hazard and we head away from the wide European boulevards down narrower streets into Kinshasa proper, an area of tin-roofed houses, shambling backstreets and palm trees sprouting beside lorry parks and petrol stations.

3.30 and people are everywhere. Sitting in red-lit bars, strolling down main roads, hanging out on pavements where a scrappy white board reads "Viva La Musica". The sound of rumba fills the air - not your cheek-to-cheek ballroom variety but Zairean rumba, a flood of rhythm that pumps into the night from every bar, every hotel and every open air club in the neighbourhood.

There is no let-up. When I reach Hotel Luv Zaire, OK Jazz's mournful "Mamou" pounds sweetly from the deserted hotel bar. Outside, four more bars create a confusion of noise while down the road red light and hot music leap from the Veve Centre nightclub like sparks from a furnace.

At 4.30 I go to sleep to the sound of Rochereau singing "Sarah". I wake at seven. They're still playing it: same song, same bar, same people.

The one thing nobody does in Matonge - and they do a lot - is sleep.

FOR 25 years, Kinshasa has been the source of Africa's hottest dance music: a mix of tight harmonies and flamboyant guitar playing that has spread southwards to the sungura bands of Zimbabwe, east to Kenya and Tanzania and north to bring new licks and tricks to the highlife bands of Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.



## ZAIRE

## SOUKOUS WITHOUT TEARS

It is hard to give precise dates. Suffice to say that the acoustic guitar appeared in what was then the Belgian Congo around the second decade of this century and caused a major switch from traditional instruments to new styles and rhythms; above all the rumba and polka that had been brought down the coast by visiting African and Afro-American sailors. Imported Cuban records stepped up the interest. In Kinshasa in the late 40s, the father of modern Zairian music, Antoine Wando, formed an acoustic rumba band, mixing guitars with brass and percussion. By the 50s, the electric sound arrived; and with it, two crucial dates: African Jazz, founded by Joseph Kabasele, aka Kalle, created one of Zaire's key musical styles, based on a progressive approach and strong Cuban feel. Franco's O.K. Jazz defined the alternative, a harder, rootsier sound that dug deeper into Zaire's traditional rhythms and folklore.

A quick walk down Avenue President Kasavubu, two minutes from the hotel, shows that Franco's reputation is still intact. In the space of 100 yards, there are 19 record stores — small, one-storey shacks with speakers in the doorways and lists of the latest 45s chalked on blackboards outside. And everywhere, Franco. When he called his O.K. Jazz "Tout Puissant" it was no exaggeration. Franco has just released a clutch of singles — brought together for European consumption on his Edipop album *Chez Rhythms Et Musiques A Paris* that confirm his position as Zaire's top social commentator, man of the people and agony aunt. "Kimpa Kisangemini", a roots rhythm from lower Zaire, warns against witchcraft and mourns Franco's younger brother, the guitarist Bayon Maria Marie who died in a car crash (possibly through sorcery) in 1970. A second song, the sprawling "12,600 Latras A Franco" deals with the jealousy that plagues Zairian marriages when the man's sister takes against his wife. Franco insists that this is no sexist diatribe — he has been asked to write the song by the woman herself, and he's got the letters, all 12,600 of them, to prove it.

Once, Franco commented on Zairian society at large. Now he's narrowed his attacks to women. It takes three taxi rides to find out why.

Franco lives in a large, two-storey house in a leafy and prosperous area outside Matonge. The house is surrounded by a green steel fence. Inside it has a garden, with trees, tables and umbrellas, a reception hall filled with sacrariums and antique furniture, and upstairs, shining marble floors, more antiques, television sets, videos and houseplants everywhere. Franco is sitting on a large garden chair.

"Why do I attack women?" he asks.

"Because they have a lot of problems. We have women who deceive men. A wife will say that she'll cook at midday. When the man returns, she hasn't done it. She's out driving around. That makes men wild. Women have problems and I sing about them."

Hard words, but not the whole picture. Franco's opinions used to go unchallenged. Today they come under ready attack from Mbilia Bel, Kinshasa's top woman singer, and her lover, the celebrated and aptly named Tabu Ley. On their recent hit "Cadence Mundanda" Bel attacks men for their laziness, uselessness and dependence on women. Lay replies that the women may do the housework, but, traditionally, it's the man that goes out and catch the food in the first place. The defence is lame: in real life, Tabu Ley turns out to be something of a champion of Zairian womanhood.

Finding him is a problem. While Franco stays put, Lay is constantly on the move. Driva to his house: he's out at the president's. Try the following day. He came back, but now he's gone out again. The third try: Lay's sitting in a Datsun at a nearby crossroad, reading the paper.

His career has been equally fast-moving. The heir to Kalle's progressive African Jazz style, Lay has created new dance rhythms, like the soukous and the soundjourn, introduced dancers, spectacle and showbiz onto the Zairian stage, and been the first Zairian to hit Europe, thanks to his Paris Olympia gigs in 1970. Recently, his career went into overdrive, but the association with Mbilia Bel has changed all that.

"Before Mbilia Bel it was usual for male singers to attack women," he says. "Now we've got someone who attacks the men back. Men are curious — the women proud."

Lay explains that he writes 80 per cent of Mbilia Bel's material. Does that make him a feminist? "No, not really, but I have a weakness for women. I was brought up by my mother. I married straight after my studies. Seven out of nine children have been girls. I'm surrounded by sisters and nieces and have created all-women dance troupes..."

Despite the weighty statistics, Lay knows where to draw the line. "According to our traditions, it's the women who look after the children, prepare the food, work in the fields. Today, that's changed: women go to university, work in offices. But we still see women in the old way. The thing I can't tolerate is when a woman becomes simply an instrument of pleasure for a man, a prostitute."

At the end of the interview, Lay strolls out onto his patio and watches as two gardeners plunge his flymo into a tangle of long grass. Lay shouts Ho and whistles, but

the noise drowns him. Finally the gardeners look up. The machine falls silent.

"Saigneur Ley, would it be possible to speak to Mbilia Bel?" I ask.

"C'est pas possible," he replies. And with that, hauls himself into a van loaded with large cardboard boxes and disappears through his palatial gates.

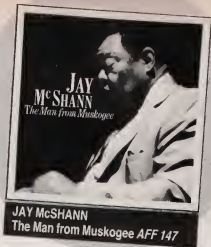
**BACK IN** Matonge, the street life beats as frenetically as ever. Newspapers spread out on the pavement attract crowds of local youth, catching up on the latest fashion, music, football and wrestling. Wrestlers, or "catchaurs", sporting leather masks or Mr T hairdos, are a big business in Kinshasa, mixing sport with fetishism, freezing opponents to the spot, falling them with a single glance, making them dance uncontrollably.

Near Hotel Luv Zaire, a photographer's board stuck with colour photos provides a roll call of current Kinshasa heroes: Papa Wamba on stage with his band, Viva La Musica; Emanaya, leader of Victoria Eleison, in extravagant leather gear; Bipoli, Lingala for "rotten", dressed in punky black and brogues; Zaiko Langa Langa, top youth band, doing their latest dance.

"Take away the beer and the music, and Matonge would fall apart," says my companion, a journalist working for Zairean television. He's right: from the wealthy bourgeoisie who come here for kicks and cold beer to the small boys who hustle dope and women, even lighted cigarettes, for the musicians, Matonge is less than a zone, more the frantic heart and lungs of the city.

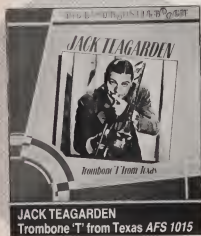
In 1958, one of Franco's gigs at the Vis A Vis club sparked a riot that spread through Matonge: a year later, the Congo won its freedom from the Belgians. In the mid 60s, a second revolution took place with the upsurge of the new youth bands. One of the first people to turn against the older generation of Franco, Kalle, Tabu Ley and Dr Nico was Bayon Marie Marie and his Orchestre Negro Succes. After him, came Tout Sahina, and, in 1968, Zaiko Langa Langa, a crucial band whose founding members operate today through Viva La Musica, Langa Langa Stars, Grand Zaiko, Victoria Eleison and their recent splinter

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affinity



group, Victoria Principal – a jarring reminder of the influence of the dull and *Delias* effects of the west on the third world.

You'd need a team of genealogists to trace the entire Zaiko clan. But to find the person who controls the whole scene that Zaiko set off, you only need to get into a taxi, say "Verckys" and wait until the yellow Renault potholes its way to the tallest, richest looking building in Matonge Kiamuangana Verckys, former sax player with O.K. Jazz and founder of Orchestre Veve, looms over Kinshasa like a cross between the Godfather and Lee Perry. His artists, Victoria, Empire Bakuba and Langa Langa Stars, are the hardest and the best; their albums, recorded on minimal equipment, range from the nearly unlistenable to masterpieces of taught, garage band souks.

Verckys' power is formidable. It comes partly from his own business skill, partly from the parlous state of Zaire's economy, where little is made and almost everything imported. A complete set of instruments costs around £250,000 and Verckys is one of the few people with the necessary money and import licence to bring them in. In the 60s, musicians turned to Franco for help. When the youth bands came along, they looked for a sponsor and found Verckys. Before long, Verckys had built up a monopoly; hiring instruments to some bands, awarding instruments and contracts to others. Today, Verckys has the best studio in Zaire – an eight-track, shortly to be replaced by a larger, 45-track model – a pressing plant, rehearsal rooms and a nightclub, set in his cement-clad Veve Centre complex.

Kinshasa buzzes with talk about Verckys. To some, he is the champion of the young bands. To others, an exploiter, who poaches musicians away from stable bands, using the lure of instruments to trap them into punitive contracts and worse royalty payments. To Franco and Tabu Ley, he is an intruder, the usurper who broke their monopoly. The situation became worse when Verckys was made head of the musicians union, a position which doubled his power. Then things started to happen two weeks before my arrival. Verckys was set upon by a gang of youths, they seized his car and beat him up.

He seems unshaken. Sitting at his desk in the Veve Centre, Verckys explains: "Franco and Tabu Ley want me to leave the union. But how can I when I was elected? If I leave, it'll be by the main door, not out of the window."

He then holds up a letter from the two, asking for a meeting to talk about the union. Verckys isn't going. "It's for the people to decide," he says, "and I'm not of the musicians union."

Three days later, he is deposed as head of the musicians union.

**MIDNIGHT AT THE Cosmic Club**, home of Grand Zaiko Wa Wa. Formed in 1979, the band is one of the top offshoots of the original Zaiko Langa Langa. The bandleader, Manuaku, was a founding member, the man who revolutionised the Kinshasa guitar style. Before Zaiko, the guitar provided the rhythm and embellishment, but it was left to the horns to get the dancers moving. With Manuaku, the guitar took over, as blustering lead instrument. Along with a new instrumental sound, Zaiko also introduced a harder rhythm, a folk-based dance, the *avacha*, and a rougher singing style, best described

## ZAIRE

as a *beau disordre*, which replaced the old smooth harmonies with a rough vocal blend keyed around the central chord system. The sound is still alive and well in the music of Grand Zaiko.

The evening starts slowly. The warm-up band is playing "Guantanamera". The singer's voice, loud, deep and migraine-like in its intensity, booms round the empty, open air dance floor. The arrival of Grand Zaiko puts to an end the Latin cavortings. Four singers gather on stage, all wetlook hair, baggy leather trousers, pleated extravagantly and riding up their calves; their faces are whitened with Ambi ointments and soaps. In medical circles, these whiteners are condemned for their high mercury content, which can lead to skin cancer. Most ointments are made in the west, where they are banned. In Zaire, where the distributors have found an open market, they have been style and fashion for years.

Grand Zaiko start in traditional style, launching into slow rumba and then switching to the fast roots rhythms of the second section, or *seben*. The audience, who sit out the rumba, take to the floor. Manuaku, tall, moustachio'd, perfect gent rather than rumba rude boy, stands in the corner, nursing his moustache and unleashing volley after volley of soukous guitar from the top of the fretboard. To his right, the singers spring into the latest dance, taking it in turns to shout the instructions into the microphone. The crowd swivel full circle, raise their right knees and – freeze. The dance is ancient. It's called "Bayaka Ba Ye Mabe" but it's now part of Grand Zaiko's stage show.

For the young bands, set dances – one a year – are as vital as pleated trousers, brogues and the wet look. Some, like Zaiko Langa Langa's "zeketezekete" (premier edjexieme episodes) take their inspiration from traditional dances. Others, from the modern world. The most popular include the Pump Injection, from Victoria Eleison, Bipolite's "Mbrototo", which mimics a motorbike rider revving up, and the Submarine – "Ob-Nagez, Ob-Nagez" devised and demonstrated by Pepe Kale, the enormous leader of Empire Bakuba.

One of the newest and most influential dances, La Firenze, comes from another son of Zaiko Langa Langa. Papa Wemba, an artist/eccentric who is known for his imported flash clothes – straight from the top couturiers of Paris and Rome – his flamboyant behaviour, cranked-out brushed-back hair style, and creation of a new argot, based on French, English and the local Lingala.

Everything about Wemba is stylish, larger than life. He lives in Matonge – but has rechristened it Village Molokai, with himself as chief. Asked to appear on Zairean television, he turns up in pith helmet, baggy shorts, ivory-tipped cane and white socks. So do the ten small children who follow him.

On stage, he is the master of "la grille", a perverse display of his latest clothes – trousers from Italy, shirt from France, Italian shoes occasionally balanced on his head or laid out at the edge of the stage for great effect. Designer labels are held up, prices quoted. Everyone, it seems, likes a cheeky chappie, and Zaikos are no exception.

If Wemba rules the fashion scene, his

musical influence has been equally strong. In 1973, President Mobutu launched his "Authenticity" programme to restore traditional culture and self-esteem. Towns, cities and rivers lost their colonial names and took new Zairian ones. Artists and musicians returned to the roots and Wemba was in the vanguard. After splitting from Zaiko, he formed a new band, Isife Lokole, bringing a traditional drum, the *lokole*, into the line-up. Bypassing the accepted western stage gear, Wemba started his act dressed as a traditional chief, in raffia skirt, cowrie shells, and pointed shell-covered hat. For the youth, this was a shock exposure to something traditional and, thanks to the colonial mind warp, crude and shameful.

Today Wemba is back in expensive European clothes – and back in the headlines too. "Papa Wemba plays Brazzaville, Four Deed," yell the newspapers. The crowd had turned up not to hear Wemba, but to look at his latest togs.

**IN MATONGE**, to be a star is everything. At the Gillette D'Or a crowd gathers as Lido Kwemba, one of Papa Wemba's singers, disappears inside. Kwemba has had a couple of hits, built around Wemba's jamosket rhythm, and is now a hero, possibly anti-hero to the Kinosis youth. His manner is different and perplexed. He sports baggy white trousers, a cotton blouson whose outsize shoulders slide halfway down to his elbows. That night, at the Vis A Vis, he sits against the wall until one of his numbers comes up. He stands awkwardly at the microphone, hands in his pockets.

Next day, a further commotion. The speaker in Zadis' record shop pumps out Victoria Eleison's majestic "Sans Preavis" and lo-a carpers inlo sight, carrying lead singer Ememeya in the back. Of all Kinshasa's youth musicians, Ememeya is the most charismatic. He has the hauteur, the smugness of the true star. His hair, looked after by his personal coiffeur, is scraped back at the sides, and leaps up straight primus. His staring eyes and scrubby beard have earned him the name Jesus.

At home, Ememeya sits in front of videos of Bob Marley, Madonna, Musical Youth. But his real inspiration comes from above. "My songs are mostly about God," he says. "God, the Bible, and morals. I can't compose something without looking at the Bible, especially the Apocalypse, the Revelations. For any problem, the Bible has the answer. *Moribanda*."

And politics? "Well, up to a point. In 1983, Kennedy managed to prevent nuclear war. South Africa? Well, that's an old problem. To any law, there's an exception."

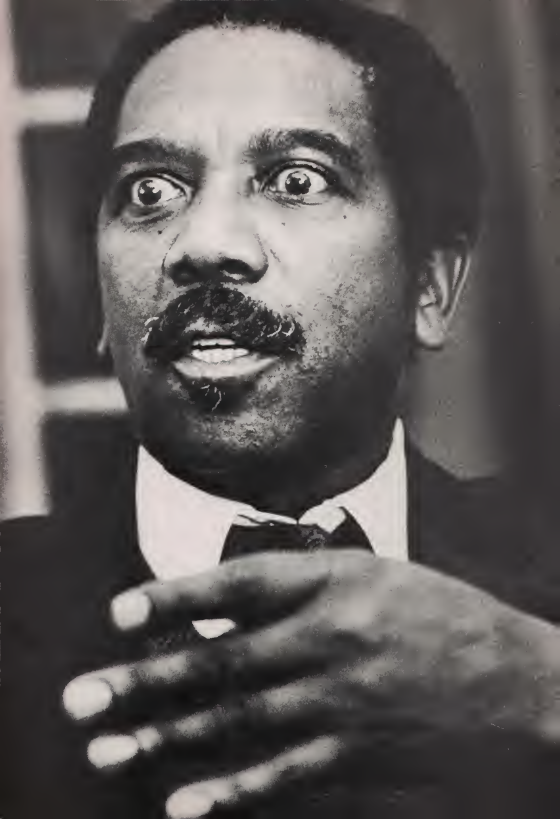
Even Ememeya has his problems though. The next night, he's due to play at the Veve Centre. By midnight, nothing's happened. The rest of the band are hanging around outside. The problem: Verckys, apparently. He won't let them have the instruments.

Two weeks in Kinshasa come quickly to an end. At the airport I'm walking on to the tarmac when I see a familiar haircut: Ememeya's. By now, people are waving and shouting from the visitors balcony.

Ememeya explains that he's off to Brussels to buy his own set of instruments.

A break with Verckys? A brand new Victoria?

Just say: Good Luck.



## JIMMY SMITH

## WHERE'S THE MUSIC COME FROM?

**GRIPPING HIS** thighs like he hated them, Jimmy Smith glares at me as if I might be those powerful hands' next victim:

"Do you know what a B3 is?"

Er... um... no (shaking like a leaf).

"It's an organ," spoken with all the infinite impatience normally reserved for a particularly stupid child. "Where's the music come from?"

Well, er, it comes out of the organ; but before that, surely, doesn't it come from...?

"Nah, nah, hold it. Hold it!" (I quake)

"Now, where's the music come from? The O-R-G-A-N, right? That's where you start from. Once it's out, the music is self-explanatory!"

We've all heard this one before, whether it's issuing from the lips of the meekest, mildest of jazzmen or, in this case, from the heavily carnivorous-looking jaws of the lion who sits roaring a single yard distant from my all-too-frail little body. (At least, I muse, searching desperately for crumbs of comfort, photographer Nick White is here to snap the evidence should the Incredible One take it into his head to rend me limb from limb.) Often, jazz musicians seem less than crazy about talking through the more abstract sources of their music. Who can blame them? Jazz is so often just another word for exploitation.

We had pursued him, Nick and I, through the wings, the vomitories, under the belly of the stage, down the clammy corridors that vein the backstage area of London's Dominion Theatre, in order to consume a previously-agreed arrangement to talk briefly while Milt Jackson and Co. swung through their own half of the Philip Morris Superband concert. Brief had been the exchanges when our paths had intersected: "Not now, later!" had been the gist.

You see, Heathrow Baggage Handlers, with all their infinite finesse, had managed to ignore large, vertical red arrows painted on the flight-case and dumped Mr Smith's unique Hammond upside down on the tarmac after off-loading it from the aeroplane that had just brought the band in from the continent. As a result, the keyboard had been squashed meaning half the keys didn't spring back to their normal position after being played. Mr Smith was understandably livid. Unfortunately, we weren't to know this until later when, in the company of an intrepid Brian Case, finally caught up with the organist in a bare dressing-room in the middle of which he sat, burning like a coal.

**FRANK FOSTER**, Kenny Burrell, Grady

Tate, Jon Faddis and Jimmy Smith were to supply the second half of the evening's music. They trooped on stage looking slightly disconsolate (or was this just an illusion fuelled by the half-hour or so I'd spent in the company of The Sermoniser?) and, to begin with, their music seemed as furrowed with worry as their brows. No-one was going to be unprofessional enough to make excuses about the organ not working properly, but what would happen if it packed up completely? If Jimmy, in sheer frustration, stomped off stage to strangle the tour manager? How would an audience react if the man they had waited long and hard (and paid good money) to hear play was rendered incapable of doing so by the despair of his instrument? No wonder the supremely dignified elegance of Kenny Burrell seemed to be a little crumpled; no wonder his playing was too.

Jimmy had instructed us in his dressing-room to keep our fingers (or was it something else?) crossed when he sat down to play. Mine had fused into a painful Gordian knot.

**WHEN JIMMY** Smith says he taught every organist worthy of the name to play, you believe him. There is no musician in any other field who towers over the history of an instrument the way Smith does over the chequered past of the jazz organ. Nor would he let you get away with just labelling it jazz organ. Smith plays organ, Larry Young, Don Patterson, Jack McDuff, Big John Patton, Lonnie Smith, Shirley Scott are all his 'pupils', presumably literally in as many cases as metaphorically.

"I made the Hammond organ."

It's always tempting to dismiss Smith's recordings as frothy, down-homey, good time, groove-diggers. The burbling swell of his comping and the blues structures favoured in his Blue Note days lend those albums a light-weight, campy air if approached superficially. So too, perhaps with more justification, the later big-band treatments of pop/R'n'B tunes of the sixties. But that, once again, is only an illusion. This man's playing, his conception, his voice is hard.

His swing, as broad as a continent, is overpoweringly up-front, too gurgulous for some ears; as if its brazen honesty were just a trifle too vulgar for the sophisticated palate. This attitude is, of course, brazen nonsense, not to mention offensive. That huge swing may well come on from time to time like a bull in a lake of hot grits – rumbustious, burnt-arsed and furious – but

then take the man... This is no hack display of minstrellesque down-home hokum, it's an extremity in the same way that Coltrane's tone is uncompromisingly withering, or Parker's attack is as brutally abrupt as the slamming of a door. Jimmy Smith's born door swing is simply his voice. No bullshit.

I begin to suggest to him that this could well be a reason for his enormous popularity in certain British clubs over the past two years. Does Mr Smith know that a lot of people are buying his records partly for the purposes of dancing?

"Dancing?" he snarls, "what kind of dancing? Not this shit they do, like that fuckin' disco stuff! I hope they're doing interpretive to my music. I don't make music to do this shit to." (There follows the Smithsonian History of Disco Dancing in fifteen seconds: all arms, legs, tongue and eyeballs) "Dumb shit with the yellow streaks and the blue streaks in their hair. And those mod clothes they're wearing. You can't dance to my music in mod clothes!"

I insist, as bravely as I can, that these people are real jazz fans. Just young ones. The fire in his eyes appears to be a little doused, as if rain had begun to fall: "That's what I wanna hit on. Over here it's different. In the US there's too much music, man. They take jazz for granted which is why it's not as big as it should be; as it is in Europe. People are hungry to hear you over here. In Japan I'm a God. They worship me, man. They'll cut your ass all over the place if you talk about Jimmy Smith. There's heads and arms laying all over the place, kicks cut off and shit. You know... Aieee!"

He lunges for my nether regions and I begin to wish I'd put on my special party-poopie electrified cod-piece before coming out, the one with the machine gun posts and Doberman Pinschers patrolling the perimeter fence. This is heavy, man.

**PERHAPS THE** Anglo-Saxon elements of our culture are terrorized by some obscure race-memory of Reginald Dixon. Certainly, there is an awful lot of prejudice about the organ (Organism?) about. Countless are the number of times I've heard that well-worn disclaimer: "Oh, it's really good; Turrentine's brilliant. It's just that... well... I can't get into the sound of that bloody organ." Imagine, for instance, that you just can't get into the sound of the trumpet: out the window go everyone from Armstrong through Clifford Brown to Marsalis.

Continued on page 21



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## SCREEN REVIEW



Ms Holiday

## MAX HARRISON WATCHES THE BBC JAZZ WEEK

THE LETTERS JAZZ danced across the cover of the 7-13 December issue of *Radio Times*, and below there appeared the predictable names: Frank Sinatra and the inescapable Johns – Lennon and Elton. There were articles on all three inside, but also, strangely enough, pieces on jazz itself, although these bore discouraging titles such as *Jazzmatazz!* or *Sax Appeal*. And it must be admitted that any night there was some actual jazz in the BBC 2 programmes, even if we had heard a lot of it before.

Their week stumbled into action with a film of days in the life of the dreary old Bruce Turner Jump Band. Also from the 1960s was archival film of Steve Race introducing Erroll Garner and Ben Webster. Garner was as per his records, and Webster, maybe handicapped by the overstated local pianist he had with him, was lethargic except when set alight by Ronnie Scott's participation in "Night in Tunisia". The latter also surfaced, of course, in *Club Eleven Reunion*, which went off excellently on its own terms. In 1949-50 I visited the original squalid Great Windmill Street premises quite often. Obviously that was during a very different stage of one's life from that which I am now in, and I think and feel differently about nearly everything. Should I be discouraged or otherwise by the fact that for most of those on and off the bandstand nothing seems to have changed? Perhaps the simple truth is that I never really enjoyed local pop, even if, then as now, it was the product of British

brains, British skill, British initiative . . .

*The Long Night Of Lady Day* and *Laughin' Louis*, thoroughly competent screen biographies, fully deserved reshewing, even although the former included some of one's least favourite people explaining how well they had known her. The latter gave us a clip from the 1932 *Rhapsody in Black And Blue* which had Armstrong standing in soap bubbles, draped in a leopard skin, and playing sublimely. Another of the musical peaks came unsurprisingly from Charlie Parker, teamed with J. Birks Gillespie, in another documentary-style compilation, *The Apollo Story*, an alleged history of a certain Harlem theatre, or theater. If we tactfully ignore the low quality of most of the dancing shown, this was otherwise notable for Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) voicing currently modish notions on the African nature of pop.

Among the week's more engaging features was the way jazz, or something like it, cropped up in totally unexpected places like *Whistle Test* and *Ebony* (though not, of course, in *Black Silk*). Most surprising of all, however, were the outbreaks of jazz in *Syncope*, a spectacularly bad 1942 film supposedly tracing the origins of this music in N'Orlins. Besides a song from Connie Boswell, this had the forgotten Stan Wrightman admirably doing Bonita Grenville's piano playing for her, and Bunny Berigan ghosting the trumpet solos of both Rex Stewart (!) and the actor (?) Jackie Cooper. Berigan stood at another of the week's musical peaks.

*One Night With Blue Note*, a concert filmed in New York's famed Town Hall last February, showed Freddie Hubbard, Benny Wallace, Art Blakey and others purposefully at work, and came dangerously close to suggesting that jazz is still alive, and even quite well. If, though, you sought the reassurance of unrelieved tedium, you tuned confidently, your eyelids already drooping in anticipation, to Count Basie's band, filmed at New York's famed Carnegie Hall in 1981. This ought to have been called *The Lowest Of The Low*, but that title was oddly enough assigned to what followed – Russell Davies's highly entertaining history of the bass saxophone. The chief attractions here were film of the great Adrian Rollini and wise words by Gunther Schuller. Local bass saxophonists, it seems, hold regular meetings and perform together. The sight and sound of a dozen or more of these monsters in concerted action evoked a well-arranged down-hill charge by some of the larger dinosaurs. Do piccolo players go in for this sort of collective madness?

In the rather noticeable absence of Duke and Ornette, the item I enjoyed most was, naturally, the most didactic: *The Honky Tonk Professor*. Here Dick Hyman analysed and demonstrated piano styles from Joplin to Our Cecil. Well – Your Cecil. Taylor aside, he had illuminating comments on them all, and this programme deserves an article to itself. But already I have absorbed far more space than the Editor bargained for . . .

Continued from page 19

I suspect that fear of the unknown has a lot to do with it. After all, brilliant organ combos have never been exactly proliferate and the organ is an extremely difficult instrument to play, requiring the attentions of all four limbs over two keyboard manuals, a set of bass pedals and another raised one for volume control ("A lot of those young players are too fuckin' lazy to learn the pedals.") Yet Smith has a remarkably individual and articulate voice as a soloist, frequently carving up the most blistering contributions of his sidemen in powerful flights of imagination; twisting, turning, curling melody and rhythm into complex knots of notes.

"My approach to the organ is like to a horn. I'm like Ella Fitzgerald when she scats . . . Everybody plays the organ like Jimmy Smith, except Shirley [Scott – whom Smith cites, at one point, as his favourite organ player]. I've listened to horn players all my life: Don Byas, Coleman Hawkins, Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb, Lockjaw Davis. I can scat like Lockjaw. I can sound like him with my voice if I wanna. I can't sing like an organ, but I can hum every damn thing like Lockjaw: Gunnghrrgh . . ."

He launches into an extraordinary guttural impersonation of the tenor player that appears to come straight from his

belly, describing a loop in the air before returning, like muddy water, back down his throat.

" . . . gnnghaarghguh. He don't play forwards, he plays backwards. There's one whole clan that plays like that: Paul Gonsalves, Lockjaw, my friend from Philadelphia . . . damn! I don't see him much, that's why I've forgotten his name . . . but it's all backwards. I don't know how the hell they do it!"

Listen to Smith's solo on "Just Friends" from the House Party album. I don't know how the hell he does it.

Who were the best horn players you ever played with?

"All of 'em."

Alright then, who were your favourites?

"A few favourites. Like Stanley Turmentine, Lou Donaldson, Hank Mobley . . ."

I venture a particular favourite of mine; the man whose lengthy adventure on "The Sermon" remains, to me, a paradigm of New York blues: Tina Brooks?

"Tina Brooks was my favourite, my f-a-v-o-u-r-i-t-e horn player . . . for that particular time."

WHEN he plays, Smith bares his teeth with concentration – just like on all those Blue Note covers. It's an impressive sight. Tonight he is concentrating on more than one level. I'm reminded of how, in answer

to one of Brian's questions, he described the blind Art Tatum memorizing all the duff notes on a dodgy piano he'd been forced to play on. When Tatum came to a broken key he would simply hop over it as if it didn't exist, yet continue to make complete musical sense. I get the impression that this is what Smith is now doing as he rips into the machine.

After a distinctly lacklustre start, the band begins to cook after thirty minutes or so. Burrell still seems a trifle restrained, but Foster is already beginning to open up. The key to this liberation has been a trio feature for Smith ("It's Alright With Me") that could quite easily have been fairground music. In pumping four-time, the organist suddenly becomes highly animated and the phrases spurt from the speakers like barbed streamers. Most extraordinary of all is the fact that his left foot, in oblivious disjunction from the rest of his body, continues to roll out a massive bass-line with casual ease. It seems like the walls of The Dominion might split like a pumpkin from the pressure of this huge swing.

At one point during the interview, with Jimmy apparently close to assaulting his interrogators once more, the distinguished, smiling head of Kenny Burrell appeared round the door for no more than a couple of seconds. Before he withdrew he simply said: "He's a genius." Incredible and true.

## MAGGIE NICOLS



JAC KILBY

THE SINGER OF SCIT-SCAT CHIT-CHAT SPELLS OUT A  
LITTLE OF HER HISTORY TO DAVID ILLIC.



## LIVING OUT YOUR CONTRADICTIONS

**ON STAGE** she can be demure sometimes, didactic even, and when the mood takes her, a little wild too. Her spindly frame, wiry hair and music style of soft-scat-chit-chat lends something of the edgy presence. She moves, first from one foot to the other... arms waving like branches blown to and fro in a gusty wind, as if to express something she can't put into words. Consonants build into rhythmic progressions, then are stretched into words... further extended into pure Cockney banter. She moves through the octaves with a staggering ease, scampering this way and that like a terrified mouse.

B-bu-but-T - what's more it has heart - yes - and honesty too. It's as demanding as the wildest extremes of the avant-garde, and yet so tightly interwoven with facts of the familiar. High art meets kitchen sink drama.

Cut to a top floor flat in Peabody Estate - chez Maggie Nicols. A seat in the corner of her matchbox-sized kitchen; a spaghetti feast boiling on the stove; the edge of the rubbish bag licking my right earlobe; and Nicols darting round the room... sometimes soft and serious in tone, other times breaking out in peals of laughter. It's like I've been here many times, and yet I've only just set foot in the place. Here there are no spotlights, no stagehands - I have to remind myself I'm not at a gig, the feel is so familiar.

So how to write about her? As the virtuoso singer? 'Miniatures' impresario Morgen Fisher said to her: 'Maggie could easily join the '4-Octave Club' which Cleo Laine waffles on about, but she doesn't give a shit about that sort of thing'. Or as what she represents - the musical emancipation of women in jazz and contemporary improvised music. Without her there would certainly have been no FIG, nor Contradictions - the two all-women groups founded by Nicols at different times over the last decade. The reality is that Maggie the performer and Maggie the catalyst are inextricably bound up in each other. Music is her life - and she lives her music.

The range and diversity of her activities emphasises her broad musical base: co-ordinating Contradictions, an open forum for women's arts; workshops with the Brixton Young Socialists; mixing standards and free improvising with the aptly-named Very Varied; a whole gamut of improvising associations - with fellow singer Julie Tippetts, reeds-player Lindsay Cooper, bassist Joelle Leandre, pianist Pete Nu and saxophonist Lou Coxhill to name but five; 'new music' with Trevor Watts' multi-ethnic Moire Music; and off-

the-wall pop with Lask ('an 'out' version of The Eurythmics in some ways').

**SHE STARTED** out as one of the Windmill Girls, singing and dancing in the famous Soho review until it was eventually closed.

'My dad freaked at first - we only lived round the corner from the place and it had a terrible reputation. During the war it never closed - even when the bombs were dropping: only by the end the catchphrase had changed to 'we're never clothed'. For its time it was outrageous - we did fan dances, wore the skimpiest clothes... Ironic when you think how strong a feminist I am now... how to flaunt my sexuality. But it gave me a break - this agent came round and landed me a singing job in a strip bar in Manchester. I'd learnt a lot from doing the Windmill, but I still had no confidence as a singer'.

'I was very intimidated by the jazz scene, and very eager to be popular. Ronnie Scott's was round in Gerrard Street. I used to beg, borrow, or steal to get in. All I saw were men playing instruments, and women singing - Kathy Stobert was around, of course, but I never saw her until years later. The idea of playing an instrument never crossed my mind, and I suppose one of the reasons why I strove so hard to use my voice instrumentally was that I felt so inferior.'

'(The late bebop pianist) Dennis Rose was the first musician to actually encourage me. I'd met up with him in '65 - I'd been abroad for a year as a dancer - got into all sorts of scrapes. When I came back I made straight for the jazz clubs - I was desperate to sing. A wonderful teacher Dennis - he was instrumental in getting a lot of people started - when he felt I was developing he would test me, try and trip me up; but he'd always catch me if I fell. Through him I got the confidence and the contracts, learnt all the standards...'

But it was the Spontaneous Music Ensemble which sowed the seeds of her own music.

'I remember first going to the Little Theatre Club - Norma Winstone, Derek Bailey and Kenny Wheeler were down there - amazing music... it sounded weird and yet it was so coherent. It was only after meeting Trevor Watts at a press reception that I went there to sing. We did one of John's (Stevens) workshop pieces where you took a deep breath and re: ealed the first note that came into your head. It was so simple, yet it did exactly what it was designed to do - I relaxed, opened my ears and found I was improvising. John's insistence that music was very much a social thing proved invaluable - I've since used some of his techniques in my own

workshops. I was still singing in strip clubs, but then the involvement with SME became deeper.'

So too did her involvement with feminism. 'I'd found a copy of *The Female Eunuch* lying around at Oval House after a workshop - one or two chapters, like 'Fear Loathing & Disgust' really ran true to my own experience. But I was going through a wider political education as well - I'd left SME and become involved in a lot of fringe theatre activities down at Oval House, and during this time I joined the Workers Revolutionary Party: for a while it almost took over and I didn't do many gigs.'

It's only in more recent years that Nicols has effectively struck that oneness of being both person, performer and catalyst.

'And it was hard too. I went from being a nobody to suddenly having male musicians saying I was exceptional. I could have basked in that light of approval, but doing workshops brought me down to earth because everyone in those workshops sang so well. There's obviously that human streak of jealousy - like you'll read in the music press of somebody doing something, and you think 'I can do that and nobody knows' - but it's dangerous to let it get out of hand.'

**'FEMINIST IMPROVISING'** Group (FIG) was my first attempt at breaking out - at the same time as it being very influenced by my becoming involved with the Women's movement and coming out as a lesbian. I'd become alienated from the main improvising scene which seemed almost relentlessly abstract.'

FIG began as a workshop, later developing into a concert band, and finishing on the round of major festivals. For the women involved, it was the product of self-realisation.

'All these things we'd worried about as women for ages starting coming to the surface - like I realised the split between my being a mother and a musician. I bumped into a woman working in a restaurant who'd been to one of my workshops. My daughter was with me and was kicking up a fuss; so there I was... the fairly calm person in a class turned harassed mother. I used that on our first gig; Lindsay (Cooper) remembered how she'd had to wear long black dresses on stage when she was playing with orchestras, so she came on dressed like that; I found some water on stage and started mopping it up; Lindsay was playing with all sorts of domestic electrical gadgets... there was a lot of theatre. I'd never really had that intense a musical

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## VIENNA ART ORCHESTRA A NOTION IN PERPETUAL MOTION

**From no time to rag time: KENNETH  
ANSELL takes time out with Mathias  
Ruegg and the Vienna Art Orchestra**

IN 1977 Mathias Ruegg founded the Vienna Art Orchestra. Just five years later, their 1985 date sheet boasted over 80 performances (hardly surprising, then, that their most recent album should be titled *Perpetuum Mobile*); in addition, various off-shoots and splinter groups found time to slot in concerts and gigs of their own. All of which represents no small achievement for a 14-strong orchestra; it was a schedule of which many other large orchestras might be justifiably jealous.

1985 also brought the Vienna Art Orchestra to Britain for the first time. They were preceded by a cluster of albums, predominantly issued on the hat Art label, which had indicated their twin strengths – original, accommodating writing and committed playing – and garnered in their wake a brace of awards and a landslide of ecstatic reviews.

The most atypical of these releases as *The Minimalism Of Erik Satie*. For this cycle of works, Ruegg arranged music by Satie for small combinations of musicians from the Orchestra, dispensing with the services of a conventional rhythm section. And this was the music at the heart of the programme brought to Britain to tour on the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network.

**THE FIRST** date of the tour was at the Logan Hall in London, where Ruegg's Satie arrangements comprised the first half of the programme. Here, despite intermittent interference from the FA, the Orchestra succeeded in conveying the stark, crystalline beauty of this music. The musicians imbued the haunting, spare qualities of the arrangements with an embracing warmth; breathing life into their carefully sculpted forms. Particularly effective were the liquid-clear guitar play of Andy Manndorff and the pure, soaring voice of Lauren Newton. Ruegg has fully scored the pieces, leaving no room for improvisation, and yet – as on disc – the performers shaped the music through individual interpretation, working with the accomplished ease and flexibility of the improviser, and made them their own.

By the time the tour reached its conclusion in Bracknell, Satie had been trimmed back. Its effective, spare lustre and superficial melodic simplicity made rigorous demands on the performers and – as Ruegg himself explained later – "I think today has been the last time we will play the Satie. We can now play that programme perfectly, but we should stop now. We've been playing it for two years, and that's long enough". Satie now shared the first half of the programme with more recent additions to the VAO repertoire, extending the emphasis on more conventionally 'jazz'-oriented material which also made up the balance of the programme following the interval.

In both Bracknell and London this material gave the Orchestra an opportunity to display the full range of attributes which have helped to propel them to international acclaim. Chief amongst these must be their capacity to plunder from a broad range of (mostly) jazz styles and idioms, and to create from these gleanings a startling and distinctive voice of their own.

Thus they acquire the tight-snapping ensemble-play of the big-band era, be it Basie, Ellington or Miller; the impressionistic colour palette of more contemporary voices such as Gil Evans, George Russell or Olivier Messiaen; the supple fire and trammelled energy, the solo invention, of 'free' jazz; and the startling use of instrumental texture primarily evident in contemporary 'classical' traditions.

The massed brass and reeds proved capable of packing a colossal punch or dripping deep, rich and sensuous; a squealing and kindling high-note trumpet raised the hairs at the nape of the neck; and Lauren Newton's scat-soaked vocals could weave like a silver thread through ensemble work or ricochet unpredictably – yet somehow appropriately – in all directions. In fact, each soloist combined a sure improvisational flair with a deft editorial sense to telling musical ends.

**THE VIENNA** Art Orchestra blossomed from comparatively modest beginnings.

Ruegg had moved from Zurich to Vienna as a teenager in order to study composition and, in the mid-seventies, was to be found fulfilling the role of resident pianist in a Viennese nightclub. It was during this time that the Orchestra began to coalesce about him.

At first their performances were unstructured, relying on the wit and invention of the musicians in sets of freely improvised music: "When we started", Ruegg recalled, "it was not so important for me to write. What was important was that we created the right feeling between the musicians and used that to work together and create music. When I saw that these musicians could work well together, then I started to write."

Although the Orchestra has consolidated about Ruegg's composition, it has maintained an ear for adventure which has found it embroiled in a number of mixed media projects: in 1977, for instance, in street parties and a "Concert for four trees, fireworks, the soldier's book, half-militant children and orchestra"; in 1978, performances with writers, dancers and 22 other participants, and a separate event with a 45-piece brass band; in 1980, "The Eighth Day" multimedia project with pantomimes, dancers, choirs, brass bands – in total over 100 performers. More recently they have combined with Austrian sound poet Ernst Jandl, with the experimental Belgian group Le Gest performing on the sound sculptures of the Baschets, and with the Serapiontheater in Vienna in a version of Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (earning a review which stated: "Alas! The culture-world should condemn the author of this production to a sound daily thrashing, kneeling in front of Richard Wagner's grave").

Just as Ruegg and the Orchestra have been happy to stretch beyond the confines of the jazz club and concert hall, so they have drawn material from a broader musical base. They have raided as far afield as Mozart, Stravinsky and, of course, Satie, without ever falling into the 'Lousier-plays-Bach' pitfalls. Additionally, Ruegg has arranged a selection of Swiss folk songs for the Vienna Art Choir. Even within the generally accepted confines of what might be commonly termed 'jazz' their tastes have proved both catholic and astute; source material has included Tristano ("Line Up"), Monk ("Round Midnight" – naturally), and – for the *From No Time To Rag Time* project – Braxton ("N 508-10 [4G]"), Rudd ("Keep Your Heart Right"), Ornette Coleman ("Silence"), Mingus ("Jelly Roll") – a version of which also appears on their *Concerto Piccolo* album) and Scott Joplin ("Cascades"). What is more remarkable than the simple breadth of this material is that not only do



the VAO manage to sustain and invigorate the spirit of the original (although "Cascades" as a marimba feature for Woody Schabata perhaps comes close to being merely a blinding display of virtuosity), but they also succeed in extending it to the point where it becomes something that is forcefully their own.

In examining the familiar names and touchstones of the VAO repertoire there is, of course, a danger of losing sight of Ruegg's own strong compositional identity. He gives a hint of his approach in the notes to *From No Time*... when he states: "The choice of compositions is not actually a representative selection (of jazz), instead I looked for pieces which not only suited the musical possibilities of the Orchestra, but also the personalities of the soloists. After all, the musicians form the focal point..."

Thus, like Ellington before him, Ruegg writes not just for particular instruments, but also for particular musicians and soloists. The example which springs immediately to mind is in his writing for Lauren Newton, where her individual approach is both tellingly placed in its solo features, and within the ensemble scoring.

Ruegg commented: "I've known these musicians for a long time now, and that means that I'm able to anticipate how they will respond in a certain solo, but it also means that we cannot change the solos; and after 60 or 80 concerts it might be nice to change some of those solos - we've talked about that - but if you're playing in an orchestra then it's not possible to have that freedom. But if a musician is really creative, then I think he should be able to play the same tune 80 or 100 times and he will always be able to find some new ideas or patterns. In a free group of four musicians, for example, you are always playing with a certain number of possibilities. That is not really the question; the question really concerns with how much intensity you will perform in any evening."

And as their concerts testify (as do their live recordings), there is no shortage of intensity in the gigs of the VAO. In fact, the structure of the Orchestra suggests the opposite; but at the nucleus of the Orchestra itself there appears to be a surfeit of creative energy which spills over and manifests itself in a number of splinter groups.

These include the Part Of Art quintet, Harry Sokol's Timeless quartet, numerous other sub-groupings and solo projects, and the Vienna Art Choir, in which Ruegg combines members of the Arnold Schoenberg Choir with Lauren Newton and other featured musicians as required (like the Orchestra in its sphere, it runs the full gamut of vocal styles and, under Ruegg's

direction, shapes from the coherent musical statements). There is, however, no indication that these projects dissipate energies which might otherwise be funnelled into the Orchestra itself.

**TWO LINKED** questions perhaps emerge from the twin developments of both Ruegg and the Orchestra. Firstly, it may be possible to discern a shift away from the "free" jazz which was the language and medium of the early VAO (and which was the matter of their first single - a long unavailable 7" entitled "Josses Na") towards the total structures in evidence in the Satie arrangements and Ruegg's concertos, in which only the featured soloists are allowed any room for improvisation, the orchestral players parts being fully scored. Does this represent a move back towards Ruegg's original ("classical") concerns in which, as a by-product, improvisation is squeezed out? And, secondly, is it an indication that the VAO can no longer contain Ruegg's compositional aspirations?

Ruegg: "I started writing very early, even as a child. Then, with the Vienna Art Orchestra, I saw very early on that it made no sense for me to play the piano (Uli Scherer is an excellent pianist); I saw my role as composer and band-leader. Everybody in an orchestra has to be ready for compromise, and that includes me. If I can choose, I always prefer the Vienna Art Orchestra. But it's also very interesting to try and write for symphony and chamber

orchestras. In my heart and in my brain, though, it is the Vienna Art Orchestra which has the first call. It's more than just the music..."

The development - not only of the Orchestra and its associated groups, but also of Ruegg's abilities and predilections as a composer - is signposted in their recordings. Through the sustained support of, particularly, hat Art records it is possible to re-witness the gradual consolidation and coherence of a fearfully unified orchestra armed with an array of exceptionally inventive soloists; to follow the maturation of an increasingly adventurous composer handling his resources with increasing dexterity and a finely tuned ear for texture and colour.

But the last word must be left to Ruegg: "I'm not interested in being famous when I'm dead - I want to live now and realise music now, even if that music will be forgotten in a hundred years. I consider myself to be a living composer, organiser and band-leader."

"It shouldn't be seen in that way", Ruegg concurred. "Every musician in the Orchestra has worked in separate groups before, and each is free to do whatever else he wants. I think that is very important. If we all lived in one house and worked exclusively together, then I think the ideas would soon dry up. It's very important that we all also work in different groups and in different productions and come back with fresh blood. It helps to keep the Orchestra alive."



Ruegg directs while Vienna burns



## CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL

**THE ARTS** Council Contemporary Music Network tour by **Steve Reich** and Musicians, which kicked off at the end of January, this month visits Liverpool, Leicester, Coventry, Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham and other such places. Reich's programme consists of "Clapping Music", "Vermont Counterpoint", "Drumming Part 3", "New York Counterpoint" and "Sextet". His work presumably needs no introduction to readers of this magazine, but a reminder that various Reich pieces are available on ECM, etc, might be in order. "Music for 18 Musicians" is on ECM 1129, "Octet", "Music for Large Ensemble" and "Violin Phase" are on 1168 and "Tehillim" on 1215. "Variations for Winds, Strings and Keyboards" appears on Philips 412 214-1, "Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ" and "Six Pianos" on Deutsche Grammophon 2535 463. The new recordings of "Vermont Counterpoint" and "Eight Lines" on HMV EL270251-1 were reviewed in *Wire* last September.

Reich's Bristol concert is at Armolfini, and another event there on the last day of this month should not be missed. This is by Electric Phoenix, an ensemble of four voices which is generating a new repertoire that makes use of their remarkable innovations in singing technique exploited via an extensive sound system. The programme includes Berio's "A-Ronne", Trevor Wishart's "Vox I" and Daryl Runswick's "I Sing The Body Electric", a title you may have come across elsewhere. Wishart's "Red Bird", incidentally, is now available on Yes 7, his "Beach Singularity" and "Menagerie" on Yes 8.

Another Contemporary Music Network tour starts this month on the 12th at the Logan Hall in the heart of South East England's London. This finds the London Sinfonietta under Diego Masson playing Harrison Birtwistle's imposing "Secret Theatre", the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu's static, decorative but charming "Rain Coming", followed, reasonably enough, by "Rain Spell", and Kurt Weill's "Kleine Dreigroschenmusik". This gives you, natively arranged for wind ensemble, all the seedy but unforgettable melodies from Die Dreigroschenoper without any of superbart Bart Brecht's words.

Talking of Japanese music, there are two concerts at the Purcell Room at 3pm and 8pm on the 15th by Rie Yanagisawa (koto—a sort of Nipponese sitar), Clive Bell (shakuhachi—a bamboo flute) and others. These

are programmes of traditional Japanese and improvised music for these and similar instruments to accompany the creation of a large ikebana work. This event is given in association with De-Ai, an exhibition of ikebana and traditional Japanese arts in the Upper Foyer of the Royal Festival Hall running from February 14th–23rd. Another Japanese concert in the Purcell Room is on the 21st. This is by Hisako Maeda (koto) and Richard Stagg (shakuhachi), and includes such familiar pieces as Yatsuhashi's "Midare", Yoshizawa's "Chi Dori No Kyota" and Eto's "Kibo No Kyota".

Several other South Bank happenings demand your attendance, not least one by our old friends the London Sinfonietta, still conducted by Diego Masson, in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the 4th. This offers Stravinsky's "Renard", "Ragtime", "Octet", "Berceuses du Chat", and the world premieres of Turnage's "On All Fours" and of "Three Studies" for piano composed and performed by the youthful **George Benjamin**. The Endymion Ensemble's series devoted to fairly young British composers reaches **Dominic Muldowney** on the 20th, when the Purcell Room will be filled with the strains of his "The Duration of Exile", "A Second Show", "Five Theatre Poems" and the world premiere of his "Choral Preludes". Muldowney is probably best known for his music for Richard Eyre's film *Laughterhouse* (since renamed Singleton's *Pluck* and shown on Channel 4), which the Endymion Ensemble recorded. He has also written music for over 40 National Theatre productions and been a resident composer with Southern Arts.

**AN EVEN** more familiar title than "I Sing The Body Electric" is "Out Of The Cool", which besides being the name of a half-owned Impulse LP by Ian Ernest Gilmore Green of Toronto is likewise attached to a flute and piano work by **David Heath**. He plays it, with John Lenehan at the 88-toothed monster, along with other jagged pieces such as "Fight The Lion" and "Rise From The Dark" in the Purcell Room on the 28th. **Peter Maxwell Davies**'s group, the Fires of London, not surprisingly performs several of his pieces at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the 25th. Among these are a Clarinet Sonata, "Hymnos", also for clarinet and piano, and "Seven in Nomine". To be heard as well are a new piece, as yet unnamed, by **Philip Grange** and a Sextet by **Bayan Northcott**, who is

also known as a music critic.

Speaking of Northcott, his *Fantasia* for guitar is now obtainable on Bridge BDG2006 by David Starobin and others. This also carries **Milton Babbitt**'s engagingly hermetic Composition for Guitar and "Ghostlines" by **John Anthony Lennon**. A few more recent LPs unlikely to be reviewed elsewhere in this magazine (or in many other places) should perhaps be given here, starting again with **Steve Reich**. His "Music for Pieces of Wood" is now on Hungaroton/Conifer SLPX12545, coupled with Tibor Szemő's "Water Wonder", **Laszlo Mielis**'s "Etude for Three Mirrors" and "Coming Together" by, alas, **Frederic Rzewski** ("Nobody cares what he does" – John Rockwell in *All American Music*). Back to **Peter Maxwell Davies** for his Symphony No. 3, a piece that fully rewards persistent listening, now available on PRT/BBC REG1560, Messiaen's wildly outlandish and beautiful song cycle "Harawi", sung by Jane Manning with David Miller at the piano, is on Unicorn-Kanchana DKP9034, and the score of this masterpiece can be had from United Music Publishers for a mere £23. **Roger Smalley**'s "Accord" is on Auracle/Conifer AUC1008, played by the composer and Stephen Savage at a pair of pianos, and, finally, two more works of **Jonathan Harvey** have found their way on to disc. These are his "Mortuos Plango", compiled, if that is the right word, at IRCAM in Paris, on Erato/Conifer STU71544, and his String Quartet, played by the Arditti team, on RCA RL70883.

For a little light reading during the intervals of the various recommended concerts you might do worse than *Essays* by the American composer Morton Feldman (Beginner Press, £15.95). This is a hefty paperback edited by the German composer Walter Zimmermann, and some of the text is in German, though most of it is bilingual. There is an examination of the relationships between music and painting, but mostly it is not so much essays as an accumulation of anecdotes about Feldman's friendships with New York painters 'n' poets, and with composers such as Cage, Babbitt, Stockhausen and Boulez. *Orientations*, the collected writings of the last-named, is due out in the spring. Behind the Editor's back if necessary (See me, Max – Ed) I plan to write about this at inordinate length, but meanwhile remember that you heard about it in *Wire* first.

Max Harrison

# ZWERIN . . . cakes and birthdays

IF I wasn't writing this I'd be upstairs watching *The Last Days of Pompeii* on tv, but my wife (too much *Columbo*) keeps telling me that I watch too much tv. If I write fast maybe I can catch the end.

A couple of nights ago, we went to hear Michel Petrucci and Jim Hall play a duo concert. They had never played together before. People said afterwards that they thought Jim was nervous and that he lacked assurance. But I saw it the other way, he was just doing what he always does, leaving all those juicy spaces. Jim Hall is the favourite guitar player of a lot of musicians who cannot agree on anything else. Sometimes Michel plays too many notes, but he couldn't do that with Jim. Jim had really run that show and Michel knew it.

The big difference between living in New York and Paris is that the old friends you are just passing through instead of living here. Which makes relationships a lot more intense. What's that Steely Dan line: "This is no one night stand, it's a real occasion."

This time the occasion involved 15 for a late dinner. Nobody knew a good restaurant in the neighbourhood so we shoved five tables together in a brasserie on the corner. You still stand a good chance of eating well on the corner in Paris.

Before ordering, a musician with another band who was hanging out on his night off asked the waiter if we could have separate cheques. Odile was shocked, she said that was really "small change". Her English is getting better. So is Petrucci's, as a

matter of fact. He's living in Brooklyn and can put on a good Brooklyn accent: "I work my dog on toity toity street in New York." Anyway, Odile thinks it is small change to ask about the cheque when everybody's in a party mood just sitting down to dinner. But figuring 15 individual cheques later can be a hassle and I didn't see anything wrong with it.

When the wine arrived, she whispered in my ear that Michel had ordered a cake because it would be Jim's birthday in, like, 20 minutes – midnight. "See, he's not worried about a few francs," she said: "That's class."

Jim had told me earlier during an interview that when Sonny Rollins hired him to play with *The Bridge* band, it had felt like "a blessing from the pope". And that lately he finds himself defending Miles Davis, he said he heard him last year and it sounded "like Bartok with a backbeat". He lives alone in the country north of New York, plays some tennis, and as he gets older (he was turning 55) he's getting "more courage to try new things". He said he sees a lot of people take less risks as they get older but Picasso and Stravinsky didn't do that and "I want to go out like they did".

I was feeling very close to him at the table and it just sort of came out: "Hey, we're going to be the same age in 20 minutes. It sure is nice to be the same age as you."

He looked startled and asked me how I knew it was his birthday? I realized I'd blown the surprise. To change the subject, I told him about the separate cheque incident and asked what he thought about it.

"Do they take American Express cards in this restaurant?" was all he replied. It looked like that sort of place and I said so. People were whispering the word "gateau". Hall got up, as though going to the washroom.

He slipped out the door just as the cake arrived. "What's he doing?" his agent exclaimed, and ran after him. The waiter was friendly and obviously happy to be serving a bunch of crazy musicians rather than the usual tourist horde. He said: "Your friend just paid the cheque."

"Just his or everybody's?" I asked him. "The whole cheque," he answered. His agent came back and said: "He's going to his hotel. He's so shy. He said he couldn't handle it." Meaning the cake and the "happy birthday" and all. There was a discussion about chipping in to buy him a present or pay him back. I was the only one who knew that it had nothing to do with money, that Jim Hall was making a statement about asking for separate cheques before living your life.

Shoot! Movie's over.

Continued from page 23

relationship with women before, so it was good to discover what came out.

"For me, it started to lose its edge towards the end because it almost became a parody of itself. Because it could be funny, certain other risks were not taken; and there was the insecurity too. . . when we started doing the festivals there was too much worrying about what some male musicians thought about FIG. Our strength was that we were ourselves, but becoming a feminist doesn't mean you throw off all those internal feelings. I was sad when we packed up, but the ties are still there. And Contradictions is a way of carrying on what FIG had begun but which that group couldn't have pursued further."

As well as many former FIG members turning up again in Contradictions – trumpeter Corrine Linsenol, and Lindsay Cooper to name but two, Nicols' workshop-based troupe has consistently attracted amateur and professional women from other quarters – Japanese concert pianist-turned-improviser Akemi Kuhn, guitarist Sally Thompson (one-time folk singer), poetess Sue May, and painters, performance artists, dancers and film-makers too many to name. Their eclecticism is sometimes overwhelming, yet there's no such thing as a boring

Contradictions performance. Faces and features change – no two gigs are ever the same. Like FIG, it's spirited and adventurous. But there are different qualities too.

"The potential for Contradictions is limitless – although there are difficulties – the sheer practicalities of getting us all together and finding a space to work. The nature of Contradictions is workshop-based – about things being allowed to exist in their own right. And it's a meeting point for women as well; more and more of them are coming forward and taking an active role, and already there are different groups springing up. And different catalysts. My aim is to have three different Contradictions gigs on one night, and it won't be just the same few who get the well-paid gigs."

More than anything, Contradictions has marked a process of repaying the encouragement of Dennis Rose, Trevor Watts and John Stevens. "But for me to be the sole driving force is wrong. . . it can only prove limiting. Shirli Hall and Sally Thompson came along with me on a girls project in Haringey (North London) – to see what happens when they're put in a room with the responsibility of sparking things off. And it's definitely encouraged them into that role."

Contradictions could be a mirror to Nicols' own measure of balancing the

orthodox and the avant-garde. She looks up from the spaghetti and smiles. . .

"If you've ever washed nappies, you don't ever get lost in the abstract. Very often women have a better understanding of the everyday and the unfamiliar, the practical and the mysterious. Performers who are mothers have to do so much. They live Contradictions."

## DISCOGRAPHY

- SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE:** *Olivi* (Marmalade)  
**CENTPEDE:** *Septober Energy* (RCA)  
**TALISKER:** *Land Of Stone* (Japo)  
**VOICE:** *Voice* (Ogun)  
**ARK:** *Frames* (Ogun)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS:** *Miniatures* (Pipe)  
**HYBRID KIDS:** *Claws* (Cherry Red)  
**FEMINIST IMPROVISING GROUP:** *FIG* (Own label cassette)  
**LASK:** *Lask* (ECM)  
*Lask 2* (ECM)  
**LINDSAY COOPER, JOELLE LEANDRE & MAGGIE NICOLS:** *Live At The Bastille* (Sync Pulse)  
**MAGGIE NICOLS & JULIE TIPPETTS:** *Sweet & Sour* (FMP)  
**ALFRED HARTH:** *This Earth* (ECM)  
**MAGGIE NICOLS & PETER NU:** *Nicols & Nu* (Leo)  
**VARIO II:** *Vario II* (Moers)



SIDNEY BECHET

## BLUE HORIZON

BECHET  
ON BLUE  
NOTE BY  
RICHARD  
COOK

WITH SO much contemporary music demanding attention, it's getting tougher by the year to offer evidence to listen to the old stuff. We can toss around motives like history, roots and the like, but the only worthwhile criterion for calling for new ears for old jazz is whether it's really (really) going to sound good.

For Sidney Bechet, a pioneer who died 27 years ago, the case is clear-cut on one level. Bechet always sounds good. He played soprano sax and clarinet with a melodious cry that is perhaps the most instantly recognizable sound in all of jazz: he could hit notes with the fiercest clarity, whistling along the curves of a melody with a grace that would be ecstatic if it weren't so consistently present (nobody can touch ecstasy that much of the time). The vibrato in his sound—that iron flutter—put the muscle into his tone and made his lines cut through every ensemble he played in. He swung so hard that the band always seemed to assemble itself around Bechet's bidding. Legends grew up about his musical irascibility, his insistence on taking every musical lead and a ruthless domination of inferior surroundings.

Bechet did all this on an instrument, a soprano saxophone, that was unpopular to the point of obsolescence (it had no place in bop and had to wait for Lacy and Coltrane to reestablish it). Being the kind of player he was, Bechet dictated a style that could only have secondary imitators, and because there was nobody to develop his work (how could such Olympian music be built over?) he landlocked himself into a corner of the greater music.

And there Bechet has remained. Like Benny Carter, say, he became more of a respected grandmaster than a continuing significance. A case could be made for Bechet being the greatest natural in the history of jazz, but he's fallen into neglect as a part of the music. If we still listen to Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines or Bix Beiderbecke, then we still need to hear the devastations wrought by this amazing man. Because his discoveries and achievements were so self-derived, Bechet may be a more singular musician than any of them.

**THE APPEARANCE** of Mosaic's six-record set of all Sidney Bechet's Blue Note recordings offers a fine opportunity to put him under glass. 12 LP sides and 74 tracks is a lot to take of one jazzman—especially one working within the closely defined milieu which Bechet created—but as side after side testifies to his mammoth strength and will, one is compelled to push on to the very end—as if to test yourself against Bechet himself. The tracks were recorded over 13 sessions: three in 1930–40, five in 1944–46, two in 1949 and the rest in the early 50s. Most have Bechet with a rhythm section and one or two horns for company; the material is nearly all tunes that were already old or would go on to be trad staples.

Out of the large legacy of music which Bechet left on disc, these dates are both typical and poised between styles. His Victor sides are frenzied or wickedly authoritarian antidotes to the politeness of the swing era; his King Jazz records are his most impressionist; his later dates for

Vogue mix terse gaiety and a sort of intolerant stridency, brought on perhaps by the young or inexperienced bandmen he had with him. His Blue Notes, basically, are a bit of all these.

By the 40s, when most of these records were made, Bechet – who'd recorded only marginally in the 20s – found himself in the bizarre position of discovered revivalist; this, for a man who was more advanced than Armstrong in 1923–24. One of the most staggering things about Bechet was his instantaneous maturity. "Wild Cat Blues" with Clarence Williams in 1923, "Shag" with Tommy Ladnier in 1932 or, here, "Jazz Me Blues" in 1944 – it's all so clearly the same man, monolithically confident, that you wonder if Bechet simply forgot to have an apprenticeship in jazz.

What kind of music goes down on these Blue Notes? The continuity of Bechet's art may be rooted in the rigorous forms he played inside. The themes he played on at these sessions were excerpts from a repertoire that he must already have performed thousands of times over the years. There are dixieland chestnuts like "Jazz Me Blues" and "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans"; whiskery pop songs like "Shine" and "Cake Walking Babies", the latter subjected to a thunderous improvisation even though he'd first recorded the tune 20 years before this version.

"Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gave To Me" goes back to Ted Lewis (a clarinetist of a somewhat different cast to Bechet); the session with Bunk Johnson includes "Lord Let Me In The Lifeboat", something ancient, and there is even a rendition of "Joshua Fit De Battle Of Jericho". Bechet rarely composed for these dates, and the few originals here are mostly scraps of the blues, like "Bechet's Steady Rider" of 1940.

On this trusted material, Bechet founded a centrifugal art: he spun ideas from these reliable cores with an energy that scarcely ever seems to flag. It's not so much a transcending of the original matter, as happened with Armstrong in the years prior to the formation of the All Stars; more an attempt to get the group swinging on familiar ground and then flying free of it himself. Time and again, the formula pays spectacular dividends.

One example is the first session (October 1944) with cornettist Wild Bill Davison. "Shine" is taken at a snorting pace that troubles pianist Art Hodes and gives Davison some impetus; but Bechet, whose solo is almost a warm-up for the thrilling final choruses, is obviously thriving. On the stentorian gloom of "St James Infirmary" the soprano introduces a note of nobility into otherwise sleazy surroundings. Each note he hits is almost visibly dotted with intent. And then comes the jolly pounding of "Darktown Strutters Ball": there are two versions, and Bechet swaps soprano for clarinet on the second. Even though this was already a warhorse, the solos have a zip and freshness that sound like the tune had just struck popular attention.

That kind of spontaneity is the touchstone of Bechet's muse. Even at the slowest tempos, he had a passion to soar: there are no Bechet solos without a one-two legato phrase that puts a high spotlight

note into the flow. In every improvisation, he mimics the leap of the heart into high spirits, whether it's a blues or a stomp that's being played. The miracle of Bechet is that he does it over and over without making it a mere routine.

The drawback with such a compulsively virtuosic manner is an emotional one. "Blues Horizon", an E flat blues for clarinet from the 1944 date here, is a recognized masterpiece. It could stand beside Armstrong's "West End Blues" as a grand testimony of classic jazz in its most sombre colours. But what Bechet communicates here is less the broken poetry of the blues than a brilliant, microscopically judged, heroic fantasy on the blues. A blues about the blues, if you like; and what we sense is not so much straight emotional candour, more a majesty we're meant to admire.

IT WAS Bechet's majesty, much like Louis Armstrong's, which cut him off from the main current of jazz; but, unlike Armstrong, who sought release against a big band backdrop at first, Bechet stuck to his love of small groups throughout his career. One of the fascinations of this set is to observe the many variations of ensemble weight and colour and density which settled around the great man. One of the problems modern ears have with early jazz is the rhythm section: the mechanical thudding of the off-beat and insensitive crashing which goes on around the front line sometimes suggests that drum machines aren't quite the hideous new technology some think, and there's plenty of that thoughtless drive in these sides. But the horns offer many different kinds of complement to Bechet.

The session with Bunk Johnson is a stately yet unexpectedly limber variation on a classic New Orleans manner, sober and lively in equal measure. The very first date, with Frankie Newton and J.C. Higginbotham, offers a wry, skeletal atmosphere of late-night blues; and each of the sessions with Davison have different states of clarity, from the firm intricacies of the first to the chaotic but sometimes absurdly exciting feeling of the last ("Runnin' Wild" sounds primevally exhilarating).

There is a quintet date with clarinetist Albert Nicholas that explores several shades of pastel, from the bright "Blame It On The Blues" to the dark glory of "Bechet's Fantasy"; and the last two dates have an urgency emanating from the skill of all six players involved. The final session especially, with trumpeter Jonah Jones deftly modernizing Armstrong in "Ding Dong Daddy" and "Black And Blue", brings what is traditional jazz into a decidedly different light: this is 1953, and the inflections and phrases have the experience of a music which has come of age and is ripe for modern embellishment.

So the thread of a classic style persists in the material but not necessarily the method. Bechet himself is the only real constant in the music, and it will be a surprise to anyone who expects the tracks to be nothing but expertly played trad. One might as well suppose that – to pick a more modern parallel – Coltrane's *The Avant Garde*, Ayler's *New York Ear And Eye* and Rollins' *Our Man In Jazz* would sound the

same because Don Cherry plays on all of them.

Yet Bechet is more than a unifying link because he so purposefully dominates all the records. Received wisdom states that he was actually an impossible partner for other horn players, but one of the other great pleasures of this set is to hear how well most of his trumpet associates coped with a man who, after all, must have been an inspiration as well as a fearsome foil. Max Kaminsky, the elegant Chicagoan, has some beautiful, fluid and – when using the plunger mute – glowering solos to offer on his one date; Bunk Johnson, the veteran whose association with Bechet went back almost as far as ragtime, acts as a minimalist partner in adventures which evince an air of precise, unsentimental nostalgia (if that's not too fanciful). If one imagined that Bechet would overwhelm such a sparse, crabby player as Johnson, a listen to the completely democratic "Lord Let Me In The Lifeboat" will dismiss the notion: this is a personal slant on the oldest ensemble jazz, a spark of initiative passed round the group but grabbed by nobody.

Sidney DeParis, present on two occasions, has less fortune through being a little perfunctory; but Bill Davison is an improbably ideal foil to the saxophonist. He runs off clipped, firecracker phrases, rasps and spits and completely alert playing – listen to how he improves his ensemble ideas over the two takes of "Darktown Strutters Ball". It's the cloddish thump of the rhythm which hurts more than any deficiencies in Bechet's front line associates. Only Sid Catlett, on two of the earliest dates, musters any subtlety at the drums.

IN THE end, though, the weaknesses of the music are blotted up by Sidney Bechet's own contributions. One could regret that it took so long for Bechet to start recording properly if it weren't for the mass of superb music he eventually committed to disc. There's enough in this set alone to support a lifetime habit for his sound. What we hear in Bechet is a rare combination in jazz – great strength and equally profound grace and agility. He may not seem all that promising to new listeners – what he played has become the stuff of trad anthems, and there was no school of Bechet-players to keep his name alive (if Bechet had one major pupil, it was Johnny Hodges, who seldom played soprano in his later years. It's a particularly cruel irony that Hodges died a few days before he was due to play on Ellington's "Portrait of Sidney Bechet" – thus denying us our only chance to hear his specific reflections on the old master.)

In fact, Bechet today could seem like a curiosity. A listen to any of these 74 tracks – or to almost any of *The Complete Sidney Bechet Vols 1-4* (French RCA) – will affirm instead that he was one of the great masters of the music. (The records are available as a set of six, MR6-110, either as imports or direct from Mosaic at 197 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut 06902 USA. Parts of these sessions were also issued in two separate LPs under the title *Jazz Classics Vol 1 & 2*.)





BETTY CARTER

## IN HER OWN SWEET WAY

**THE GREAT JAZZ SINGER: ENERGY, ADVENTURE, AGGRESSION. BY GRAHAM LOCK**

I TELL Betty Carter, I read a quote of yours where . . . I think you said you can be very aggressive.

"I am aggressive," she replies. "Not can be, I am. I am aggressive."

Er. . . is that through having to deal with the music business?

"No, no." She leans intently across the table. "See, the only difference about my being aggressive is that I'm a female. If a man's aggressive, we don't even talk about it, but he does the same things that I do to get to his goal, right? He works at it, tries hard . . . but if I do it, it sticks out like a sore thumb — 'that female's aggressive'. And aggressive for a woman is negative, but being an aggressive man is wonderful." She pulls a face at the incongruity, and unlocks a throaty chuckle.

"Independent is another one. Use that word with a female and it's negative — what it means is she's striking out and accomplishing things, doing what she wants to do, like anybody does. But because we're the kind of society that says females are supposed to be constantly demure, and please don't ever say no . . . it's like, I've just had problems in Germany because the men there think they can do anything they want and you're not supposed to say NO to them. And because I said no, I became a dirty . . . well, a difficult person. Me!" She puts on a mock-demure expression, then breaks into a big grin.

"You know, saying no is aggressive!"

BETTY CARTER may not be difficult, but

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she has formidable presence. A small, stocky woman, smartly attired today in yellows and creams, her slightly rolling gait somehow lends a magisterial air, and her piercing glare could turn you to stone at 100 feet. She also has an extraordinarily mobile face, and a set of comically sour and sly grimaces acts as a kind of meta-text to what she says. She's witty, forthright, and very much her own woman: it's quite in keeping that one of her best-known songs is "I Can't Help It (That's The Way I Am)", a self-penned composition that includes the lines "Have you considered what it does to your soul/You sell it when you play some other's role."

I ask if feminism has shaped her views at all, but she shakes her head and says no, life has.

"Just hard work. I had a family to raise, I didn't want to become a prostitute, you know, I didn't want to go on welfare. I didn't want to do anything but sing. That meant I had to fight for it; and I wanted not just to be an ordinary singer, I wanted to become an arranger, to do things differently, to make my music interesting. So I had to study, to learn; I had to not mind getting out there on stage and sitting in. That's what I had to do."

So she did it. Betty Carter might have had to fight for it for the last 40 years, but today the results are looking good: she's raised two sons (much of the time, single-handed), she's established her own Bet-Car record company, and her art has matured to the point where many aficionados consider her the greatest living jazz singer – a performer who combines the authority of Bessie Smith with the artistry of Billie Holiday, whose live shows range from the intensely dramatic to the wickedly funny, and whose brilliant scat solos contain some of the most inspired pop-based improvisation this side of Charlie Parker.

It was with Bird, in fact, that her singing career really began. Born Ella Mae Jones in Flint, Michigan, in 1930, her first serious foray into music was as a high-school bebopper who skipped classes to catch Parker's afternoon shows at Detroit's Palace theatre and "adjusted" the age on her birth certificate so she could see him at the city's nightclubs.

"You had to be 21 to get in," she smiles, "but we had to see him. So, yeah, I forged my birth certificate and missed school, really being a very bad girl, but I loved that music."

And when someone told Bird she could sing, he invited her up on the bandstand.

"So I sang with that band – Miles Davis, Max Roach, Duke Jordan, Tommy Potter – and after that, every time I showed up Charlie Parker would ask me to sing. That was the kind of encouragement I got from him."

If Carter's fierce love of bebop first drew her into the music, that loyalty also brought problems. After she left school, she played around bars and theatres in the mid-West then, in 1948, she landed a job with Lionel Hampton's big band – only Hamp was from the Swing school and definitely no bebopper. As Carter once told writer Michael Ullman, "He would do things like get on the bus and ask me . . . 'Hey Gates, whose band you like the best, mine or Dizzy's?' . . . And I'd say, 'Dizzy's'." But Gillespie, then fronting the premier bebop big band, wasn't hiring women, so Carter stayed with Hampton, using the time to learn about music –

reading, writing, arranging.



Her relationship with Hampton grew increasingly stormy: he actually fired her seven times during the two-and-a-half years she toured with him, but each time his wife Gladys, who liked Carter's voice, rehired her. Still, Hamp got his revenge; ignoring her preferred pseudonym of Lorraine Carter, he'd introduce her every night as "Betty Bebop" – and the Betty has stuck.

In 1951 she finally left the Hampton big band for a residency at Harlem's Apollo Bar, and she's been independent for most the last thirty-five years, working nightclubs and – in the 50s and early 60s – the black theatre circuit.

"There was the Apollo in New York, the Howard in Washington, the Royal in Baltimore, the Regal in Chicago. You'd do three or four shows a day, and this way, if you didn't really know what you were doing, by the end of the tour you'd have a pretty good idea," she laughs. "That was training. It was what we needed, what every young artist needs, to find out where they want to go."

The tours in those days were truly package tours – half a dozen or more acts, each given a 15-to-20-minute spot, and assembled with little regard for the niceties of musical compatibility.

"I toured with Miles Davis, Ray Charles," Carter remembers, "with all the pop stars – The Orioles, The Flamingos, The Miracles, The Temptations, Gladys Knight And The Pips – with Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker. The works!"

You toured the South in the 50s? I ask. Before the Civil Rights movement started?

"Yeah, it wasn't until the 60s that the Civil Rights thing got heavy. I toured the South with Hampton and with Mantion Moreland in the early 50s; we did camp shows at that time." She reflects a moment. "The 50s were . . . well, you were still afraid, you had to stay on the wrong side of the tracks."

So you were playing to all-black audiences?

"Oh, sure. Mind you, when I was playing up North, I was playing to all-black audiences. It wasn't until the 60s that we really spread out. Black music was still called race music at this time and white people did not buy it – or if they did, they had a black person to buy it for them and then hid it. It wasn't until the mid-60s that the whites began to admit that they were inspired by black artists, because all the time before that Elvis Presley never mentioned the black artist. But The Beatles

did, and that's what turned everything around, 'cause they were bigger than Presley. It was The Beatles who did it . . ." She sees me smiling. "You're proud of that, huh?"

You bet. I was a big Beatles fan. That's how I got into music.

"Well, The Beatles said they were inspired by black artists, and after that more white artists came along and admitted it, and they all started singing and talking like black artists."

She laughs her deep, throaty laugh. "They're still singing like us, and now some of 'em can do us better than we can!"

**BETTY CARTER** herself remains inimitable.

She paces the stage, her head ever still, talks to the band – leading them through changes, geeing them through solos, charging herself on their energy; she paces, scats, paces, freezes momentarily in a set of grotesque poses – face screwed up, elbows out, fingers slowly clawing the air – as she suspends time, stretches tension to breaking point. She sings like no one else; a style characterized by startling intervallic leaps – the high, bright tones suddenly swooping to the lower ranges of gruff – and astonishing extremities of tempo, as rapid-fire scats alternate with ballads slowed to standstill, their silences explored for every scrap and nuance of feeling.

Highly personal, theatrical, brilliantly effective, it's also a style which, Carter insists, does not transfer easily to record.

"I've always had problems with being in a studio, in a cubicle, where all the musicians are far removed from me and there's not that closeness, that camaraderie you get when you're all together. I like being close to people – an audience makes me think, makes me reach for things I'd never even try for in a studio."

Her response has been to ensure that most of her recent recordings are live; notably her *pièce de résistance*, the two-LP Bet-Car set *The Audience With Betty Carter*, which boasts (among others) an hilariously rephrased "Trolley Song", a beautifully lugubrious "Everything I Have Is Yours", several originals, and one whole (25-minute) side of improvised scat. Still, studio albums like *Now It's My Turn* or the second *Betty Carter LP* sound perfectly good to me; the only problem I find with Betty Carter LPs is that they're nearly all unavailable – including her most famous recording, the LP of duets she made with Ray Charles in 1961.

"That was a frightening experience," she recalls. "I was relatively unknown then, I just had a little puff of a name in the New York area, and here's a big star asking me to come out to California and record with strings and voices. I mean, I was very scared. Like, numb."

I raise a sceptical eyebrow. You don't sound scared.

"You don't believe me, huh? It's true, I was petrified. Literally numb."

Listening to the record today, it's the arrangements which sound petrified, but the singing – by both parties – is magnificent, particularly on "Every Time We Say Goodbye" and the LP's hit single "Baby, It's Cold Outside", a bravura performance which succeeds in being both funny and extremely soulful.

In the 50s and early 60s, Carter had recorded for several labels – Epic, Peacock, ABC, United Artists, Atco – but, feeling

# GREAT RECORDINGS

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Recorded: Village Vanguard, New York City, June 25 1961.

*My Foolish Heart; My Romance; Some Other Time; Solar; Gloria's Step; My Man's Gone Now; All Of You; Alice In Wonderland; Porgy; Milestones; Detour Ahead; Waltz For Debby; Jade Visions. Bill Evans (p); Scott La Faro (b); Paul Motian (d).*

COMMENTING ON how Bill Evans belongs to the European side of jazz pianism, his playing thoughtful rather than directly emotional, James Collier writes: "The result is a predilection for pensive moods – the poet at twilight, so to speak. Melancholia is, of course, a perfectly legitimate mood. If Milton can write 'Il Penseroso', surely Bill Evans can produce a 'Turn Out The Stars'. But Milton also wrote 'L'Allegro' and Evans is not often seen dancing in the chequer'd shade..."

It would be foolish to claim that the implied criticism of Bill Evans' work is quite groundless; perusal of the Evans discography would certainly reveal a predilection for ballad numbers, and the criticism might well be made of the *Village Vanguard* recordings themselves.

The charge is an exaggerated one, however. First, it is often confused with a different and fallacious charge – that Evans' thoughtful and reflective attitude towards his playing, his concern with, as he put it in an interview, "the science of building a line", must accompany an emotional dedication that jazz can have no truck with (advocates of this view would find a similar target in Wynton Marsalis). Clearly, though, an intellectual outlook does not preclude passion as such. It may merely influence its direction and expression (to put the matter as dispassionately as possible). Second, there is abundant recorded evidence of Evans "dancing in the chequer'd shade" – live recorded evidence in particular. Cecil Taylor's ill-considered put-down that Evans is "so uninteresting, so predictable and so lacking in vitality"<sup>1</sup> hardly survives when one listens to the playing on a brilliant 1968 Montreux LP or the 1979 Paris Concert recordings – let alone the furious performances from Montreux in 1970.<sup>2</sup>

Having said that, the *Village Vanguard* sessions do exhibit more of the mood of "Il Penseroso" than of "L'Allegro". Why, then, should the criticisms of Taylor, Larkin and Collier be set aside and these sessions (together with the contemporaneous studio recordings) be recognized as a summit of piano trio performance in jazz?

Much of the answer lies in the extraordinary empathy apparent between the three participants, and in particular between Evans and the bassist Scott La Faro, which encouraged rich and complex musical expression. Evans had formed the trio with La Faro and Paul Motian in the autumn of 1958, after his spell with Miles Davis which secured his position as one of the most influential young jazz pianists and was notable for his important contributions to the LP *Kind Of Blue* ("Great Recordings", Wire 8). The trio made recordings in December 1959 (*Portrait In Jazz*) and February 1961 (*Explorations*).<sup>3</sup> Ten days after their final recording session at the *Village Vanguard*, in July 1961, Scott La Faro was killed in a car accident, at the age of 25. It is impossible to listen to these last recordings, with their promise of long and fruitful collaboration, without feeling that the aptest Miltonic echo is found in "Lycidas", that commemoration of tragic early loss of seemingly limitless talent. It was in La Faro that Evans found his artistic 'alter ego', the bassist's natural exuberance complementing his own generally more understated approach, and the former's death coming so violently soon after what had appeared to be their first wholly successful recording left Evans devastated.

It is indeed La Faro's bass-playing that is most immediately striking on the 1961 performances. One is impressed at once by his guitar-like facility (assisted, apparently, by lowering the bridge), and the exciting use of the upper register. Like Evans, La Faro has his favourite licks. But the incorporation of such phrases contributes to the expression of a musical personality. It is a joy to hear how Evans will fit a distinctive rhythmic figure, or La Faro a favourite dying fall, into the line, the effect being like that of a friend's familiar mannerism rather than a cliché.

It is in terms of their rhythmic freedom – principally for the bass – that the performances are most revolutionary, however. Evans noted that "[Scott La Faro and I] understood music on pretty much the same basis... at that time nobody else was opening trio music in quite that way, letting the music move from an internalized beat, instead of laying it down all the time explicitly."<sup>4</sup>

In fact, none of the tracks on the *Village Vanguard* sessions matches the freedom of some of the 1968 Montreux performances, where no one plays time as such, but in almost all of them the time-keeping role is reserved for the drums alone. It would be wrong to conclude from this advance, as Evans himself and some other writers seem to have done, that what has been developed is a new form of 'simultaneous improvisation', however.<sup>5</sup> The pianist commented at the time: "If the bass-player, for example, hears an idea that he wants to answer, why should he just keep playing a 4/4 background?... After all, in a classical composition, you don't hear a part remain stagnant until it becomes a solo. There are transitional development passages..."<sup>6</sup>

In fact, however, the format is still almost always solo plus accompaniment, but while Evans is soloing, the accompaniment is rhythmically freer and more responsive to what the soloist is doing. What a difference this makes! The first trio recording in 1959 features a marvellous driving version of "Autumn Leaves", which in fact does contain some genuine simultaneous improvisation – a contrapuntal passage where piano and bass are equal voices. But where La Faro is accompanying, he plays a straight four in the bar. None of the up-tempo performances from the *Village Vanguard* are driving in the same way, since the bassist is now hardly ever playing a straight 4/4, while Paul Motian's drumming deploys subtle polyrhythmic effects – on "My Romance" and "All Of You" these are of beguiling complexity. In the miraculous account of "Milestones", La Faro plays sequences where the notes are so stretched out it seems he is in a different metre from the others, Evans' solo appearing to float on top, and the whole effect is like a more fluid permutation of the metrical ambiguity behind Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman".

The rhythmic freedom of the trio is paralleled by harmonic adventurousness within a tonal framework – though of course Evans was a conservative if one compares his work with what Coleman and Taylor were producing at the same time. Modal improvisation, whose use in jazz Evans had pioneered during his stay with Miles Davis, is exemplified in "Milestones", while the rich and strange harmonies of the pianist's favourite "Nardis" are never presented by him to better effect than in the 1961 studio recordings (which in many respects are the equal of their more well-known live counterparts). Rather more conventional performances from the *Village Vanguard* include the haunting Billie Holiday ballad "Detour Ahead", and a joyful account of Evans' own "Waltz For Debby". La Faro is to the fore in the sombre "My Man's Gone Now" with a most beautifully resonating accompaniment and impassioned solo, but in no track is he simply in the background. His contributions show that, like Lycidas, he is "dead ere his prime... and hath not left his peer" – the *Village Vanguard* sessions are his memorial.

## Notes

1. James L. Collier *The Making Of Jazz* (1978), p. 395.
2. Quoted in Philip Larkin *All What Jazz* (1985), p. 138. Deprecation of Bill Evans seems to be the one thing Larkin and Cecil Taylor can agree on.
3. Verve MY 2064; Elektra/Asylum 960164-1, 960311-1; CTI CTL-4.
4. Issued together on Milestone M-47034.
5. Quoted in Conrad Silvert's sleeve-note to 4.
6. E.g. Michael James in his sleeve-note to M-47002.
7. Quoted in the above.







## SOUND CHECK

### JIMMY LYONS

**The World Of Cecil Taylor**  
(Candid 9006)

Recorded: New York, 12–13  
October 1960.

*Air*; *This Nearly Was Mine*;  
*Port Of Call*; *E.B.*; *Lazy*  
*Afternoon*.

Taylor (p); Buell Neidlinger  
(b); Dennis Charles (d);  
Archie Shepp (ts on tracks 1  
& 5).

### JIMMY LYONS

**QUINTET**

*Give It Up*  
(Black Saint BSR 0087)

Recorded: Milan, 6–7 March  
1985.

*Give It Up*; *Methods*; *Never*;  
*Ballad*.

Enrico Rava (t, flhn); Lyons  
(as); Karen Borca (bsn); Jay  
Oliver (b); Paul Murphy (d).

### CECIL TAYLOR

**SEGMENTS II**

*Winged Serpent* (Sliding  
Quadrants)

(Soul Note SN 1089)

Recorded: Milan, 22–24  
October 1984.

*Taht*; *Womb Waters Scent*  
*Of The Burning Armadillo*  
*Shell*; *Cun-Un-Un-An*;  
*Winged Serpent*.

Enrico Rava, Tomasz Stanko  
(t, v); Jimmy Lyons (as, v);  
Frank Wright (ts, v); John  
Tchicai (ts, bs, clt, v); Gunter  
Hampel (bs, bs, clt, v); Karen  
Borca (bsn, v); Taylor (p, v);  
William Parker (b, v);  
Rashied Bakr, Andre  
Martinez (d, perc, v).

AFTER DECADES of modern sound and fury, it's de rigueur to wonder what all the flap was about over early Ornette, Coltrane, Dolphy – even Ayler (saxophone screamers bite reeds every night of the week to this day). But Cecil Taylor has stayed shocking. True, *The World Of Cecil Taylor* is accessible compared even with some of his other early records. Alongside the vast complexity of his recent music, it's occasionally almost naive. Nevertheless, this *World* revolves in dark, astonishing ways.

Even the simple and traditional elements – the melodies of the two standards "This Nearly Was Mine" and "Lazy Afternoon", the fours with the drummer in "Air", Archie Shepp's emotionally direct solos – are made to seem just slightly out of joint, unreal in our time. Although Taylor's rhythms are at their most jazz-conventional, the pulses become wayward as the music unfolds. He starts Richard Rodgers' tune in a harmonic universe that's undiscovered, unfounded in any other apart from some European composition. Then he builds on it, as the rhythm section starts a slow shuffle, with accents that bite chunks from the melody and decorate it as no one else in jazz then did – with cruelty, razored asides, sudden stabs of dissonance.

"Lazy Afternoon", all different, is impressionist. "E.B." finds him gliding himself for the crisis music he'd conduct at the Cafe Montmartre, two years hence: now the world starts to dissolve into abstraction, jazz time is under destruction, melody is being replaced by the skyscraper complexes which make up his later music. Not quite there yet – "E.B." is forthright but still leashed.

Many of the very few who supported him then have turned away from the admittedly monstrously difficult music he has made in

the 70s and 80s. Is *The World* full of potentialities that the later Taylor neglected? Not really. An insatiable man (like Coltrane), the pianist has – I would humbly suggest – merely hidden and dispersed his smaller rewards inside the size and scope of his subsequent work. The best track here is "E.B.", and it works up to the sort of dazzling molecular shake-up that Taylor prefers to use as a starting point now.

Perhaps, though, the more reflective parts of his music have been developed elsewhere – in, for instance, the work of his frequent collaborator Jimmy Lyons. *Give It Up* is a superb evolution of Taylor's kind of concentrated small ensemble music. The altoist's tunes are fragments of line transformed into layers of dialogue by the players; all five are almost constantly involved, solos emerging like beats of the whole music. Old devices like call and response in the ensemble work with the fractious but essentially lyrical feel of each theme, and the three horns – Borca's croaking bassoon, the peppery remarks of Rava and the leader's great wounded alto sound – support and pursue in constant variation. This is the Taylor density of event softened without being diffused.

What of his own advances? The last unrevealed area of the Taylor muse may be his big band work. Many large-scale compositions went unrecorded in the 70s, and only in 1984 did he finally get a touring big band together – with, reportedly, mixed musical results. *Winged Serpent* (Sliding Quadrants) seems to be its only recorded evidence, and if there is raggedness and incoherence in places there are some stupendous moments too.

"Taht" registers a preternaturally exciting start: big blocks of riffs create a sense of marching through some sweltering war zone. From there, it just

gets hotter and hotter. Horns rage and squall over a rhythm that sounds like a giant creature levering itself off the floor. "Womb Waters" subtly (it use the term cautiously) diversifies the process: this time the horns spin clarion figures off one another, percussive sparks fly out of the mass and the whole performance becomes a cluttered rise and fall around the piano. Then, in a moving coda, Lyons and Taylor gently wind it up. "Cun-Un-Un-An" is a tribal song, with everyone humming before they take up their instruments for a cracked, ominous dirge.

Taylor does more than lead from the piano. He is the soul of the music. If some of his players sound uncertain or lost inside a music that resembles a conflagration of the brain, Taylor is as resolute as granite: in a very clear recording the piano invents superhuman criss-cross lines that charge and support everybody. Chaotic voices, thunderous drums and unbelievable speed are the commonplaces of his world now; and he manages to make sense of them. In the long title track, the pianist plays his most glorious, exultant music – after an extended horn argument, Taylor bulldozes into a fantastical show of avalanche runs, pushed on by the drummers' assault. Here, in this utter tumult, he is the very eye of the hurricane.

What's needed now, of course, is for someone to let Cecil record more of these compositions with a picked band and full rehearsal time. Over a five-record set. At least.

Richard Cooke

## CHARLIE PERSIP AND SUPERBAND II

*In Case You Missed It* (Soul Note SN 079)  
Recorded: New York, 12–13 September 1984.

*In Case You Missed It; Marching Out And Dancing In; Round About Midnight; Plutonian Images; Willow Weep For Me; Killer Joe.* Frank Gordon, Ron Tooley, Eddie J. Allen, Ambrose Jackson, Jack Walrath (t); Clarence Banks, Jason Forsythe, David Graf (tb); Carl Kleinstuber (tr); Bobby Watson, Monty Waters (as); Bill Saxton, Orpheus Gaitanopoulos, Alan Givens (ts); Fred Houn (bs); Anthony Cox (b); Richard Clements (p); Eli Fountain (perc); Charlie Persip (d).

PERSIP'S SUPERBAND casts its net wide and resounds to a number of what might be called historical imperatives (thus we avoid terms like 'eclectic' and 'influence' at the expense of some stilted writing). The first two tracks represent something of a collision between Kenton and Gil Evans, while "Killer" manages to be totally conventional yet fairly convincing. "Willow" I find stodgy, while "Plutonian" attempts to move into the area pioneered by Sun Ra but finds that moving in is one thing, surviving in that peculiarly heady atmosphere is, as they say, something else. "Round Midnight" raises echoes of

Dizzy's big band of the late 1940s – not that the arrangement has much to do with the one Dizzy used; it's taken far faster here – but there is that feeling of a performance not entirely under anyone's control which that remarkable orchestra could develop so well. This is by far the best track here and maybe argues that this may be the area where Persip could seek further to develop his band's book.

Solos are patchy; there is some good trumpet work that I take to be Walrath, though I cannot be sure as practically every name except Persip's is new to me. Persip himself, I have always felt, is a natural big band drummer, and while his work is self-effacing here it constitutes arguably the best individual performance on the record.

Beyond this essentially empirical level, however, the album compels a degree of admiration. Given that in the 1980s an even semi-permanent big band represents an idea whose time has passed, like five-day Test matches and railway branch lines, anyone who tries to keep such a unit in being has to be numbered among the eccentric, and not completely open to conventional wisdom. Such people therefore are equally a little beyond conventional criticism, and demand a degree of reverence for their determination to march to the sound of a different drummer even if you feel that the end result does not always directly equate to the effort involved.

Jack Cooke

## FRANK LOWE

*Decision In Paradise* (Soul Note SN 1082)  
Recorded: New York, 24 & 28 September 1984.  
*Decision In Paradise; I'll Whistle Your Name; Cherryco; Lowe-ology; You Dig!; Dues And Don'ts.* Frank Lowe (ts); Don Cherry (pocket-t); Gracian Moncur III (tb); Geri Allen (p); Chamette Moffett (b); Charles Moffett (d).

I REMEMBERED Frank Lowe from a decade or so ago as a strenuous player who made a lot of notes but didn't always give the impression of knowing or maybe caring where they all went. There is far more maturity now, as might be expected. His playing is more economical, and while retaining its consistently spiky angles offers a relationship to earlier saxophonists – his solo on "You Dig!" affects the shapes of Coleman Hawkins but none of the notes that Hawk would have played within those shapes – that is not less satisfying for these overt indications of intellectuality.

He has surrounded himself with a couple of younger players – the temptation to refer to them as second-generation modern is irresistible in view of the presence of the Moffetts père et fils – and three veterans of earlier voyages of discovery. In Cherry's case perhaps a veteran of every voyage of discovery since 1959!

What results from this mixture is an album that on "Whistle" and "You Dig!" has the easy familiarity of mainstream blowing, boppish overtones on "Lowe-

ology" and freer playing elsewhere. This variety of approach combines with a variety of age and experience to create freshness overall, and the feeling that what's new is not exclusively what's newest, but also what's renewed.

Jack Cooke

## MISHA MENGELBERG, STEVE LACY, GEORGE LEWIS, ARJEN GORTER, HAN BENNINK

*Change Of Season* (Soul Note SN 1104)  
Recorded: Milan, 2, 3 July 1984.

*House Party Starting; The Happenings; Step Tempest; Hangover Triangle; Change Of Season; Spinning Song; Terpsichore.*

Misha Mengelberg (p); Steve Lacy (ss); George Lewis (tbn); Arjen Gorter (b); Han Bennink (d).

"LIFE, ALWAYS rough on the artistic innovator, shafted Herbie Nichols beyond its usual standards." (A. B. Spellman)

WELCOME BACK to the saddest story... another slighted musical genius, another tragic denouement: Herbie Nichols, dead at forty-four of leukaemia and a broken heart, dead from years of neglect and despair, dead because a brilliantly original composer was ignored, overlooked and condemned to waste his talent – stifle his spirit – playing for a meagre living in banal dixieland-revival bands. Herbie Nichols' fate was not just sad, it was disgustingly cruel: shafted is the word.

That his music has survived at all is due to a handful of records – Blue Note's double *The Third World*, Affinity's *Out Of The Shadow* – and the efforts of a few aficionados, notably A.B. Spellman, who wrote the definitive Nichols piece in his *Four Lives In The Bebop Business* and provides the sleeve notes for *Change Of Season*; and Roswell Rudd, who wrote *The Third World's* sleeve notes and organized a previous Soul Note album, *Regeneration*, which paid tribute to Nichols' music, plus that of his contemporary, Thelonious Monk.

Three musicians from that earlier session – Mengelberg, Lacy, Bennink – reappear on this record, which is dedicated solely to Nichols' music (five of the songs come from his Blue Note sessions; "The Happenings" and "Change Of Season" I assume he was never able to record). It's a superb LP, thanks partly to the skill and empathy which the musicians bring to their task (Lacy has rarely played so gaily, nor Lewis sounded so lyrical), but it's thanks also to the strength of Nichols' compositions. These are such good tunes; from the drolleries of "The Happenings" to "Change Of Season" is mellowness to "Terpsichore" – smart-stepping, the music is brimming with wit, finesse and an adroit sense of structure.

Which makes you wonder again just why he was so ignored while he was alive. Nichols was a black intellectual, interested in both European classical music and the African roots of jazz, and thus unpopular with both white and black jazz

## C H E C K

mainstreams; also his music was distinctively personal, innovative, original – it fitted into none of the prevailing fashions. At a time when jazz was suddenly defining itself in terms of (among other things) masculine polarities – macho hard bop versus effete cool – Herbie Nichols insisted on being his own man, and paid the price.

There's a feeling that things are looser today, that mavericks are less at risk. I'm not so sure: I don't see visionaries like Leo Smith or Warne Marsh or Horace Tapscott getting their due rewards; Anthony Braxton, another black intellectual who dares to be interested in European classical music, faced desperate poverty as recently as last year. And these are just people I know about. What's happened to Lucky Thompson? To Sal Mosca?

It's commendable that forgotten figures like Herbie Nichols should be reclaimed and accorded their rightful place in the tradition – *Change Of Season* is a magnificent and necessary tribute. But let's not kid ourselves that resurrection is all we need to do (a tempting notion amid the current spate of reissues). There are innumerable musicians who are neglected, poverty-stricken, and alive: how many of them will have to wait until 20 years after their deaths before they begin to receive the recognition they deserve? To put it crudely, isn't it time to shaft profit motives instead of people?

Graham Lock

## PHIL WACHSMANN

*Writing In Water*

(Reed 23)

Recorded: London, 19 October 1984 (side one); various locations, 1984–85 (side two).

*Writing In Water; Water Writing*

Wachsmann (vln, electronics).



PHIL WACHSMANN is a rarity among our improvisers: he cherishes melody, as well as subjecting it to the destructions which are the stock-in-trade of free music. So sections of *Writing In Water* are close to pure song, the violin unrelenting lines which aren't too far from folk survivals. This happens most clearly on the second side, a patchwork of live and studio efforts spliced into one piece: brusque pluckings next to bits of virtuosity that would have made Sarasate nod. Though intended as a whole, "Water Writing" exists and reacts as a sequence of sketches: the drone of the

instrument has the rise and fall of a human pulse, and against that Wachsmann adds decoration – or leaves it naked.

"Writing In Water" is his absorbing set from Actual 84 (although both sides are unfortunately a trifle lo-fi, so this recording misses the resonant atmosphere the performance generated in person). Phil's use of electronics is professionally sane and free of excess: waterfall echo builds around the violin's voice, speed flux sets it to mutter off into infinity. Much of the music sounds like a cave of spirits, scratching at walls, babbling in tongues and resolving, usually, in a clean bowed note. When he improvises with groups Wachsmann can be as irrational as anybody, but on his own he likes to return to a tuneful shelter every now and then.

Richard Cook

## AZIMUTH

*Azimuth '85*

(ECM 1298)

Recorded: Oslo, March 1985.

*Adios lony; Dream/Lost*

*Song; Who Are You?;*

*Breathtaking; Potion 1;*

*February Daze; Til*

*Bakeblikk; Potion 2.*

John Taylor (p, org); Norma

Winstone (v); Kenny

Wheeler (t, fl h).

AZIMUTH is a group that's far better suited to the recording studio than live performance. Only then do they come into their own, with the addition of a silent fourth member to their number, the recording engineer. Sound quality is such a crucial component of their work, whether to capture a fleeting moment of sustain from Taylor's piano or the haunting richness of a Norma Winstone glissando, that they are in essence ideally suited to the Nordic cool of Manfred Eicher's ECM sound. Voice and horn mark each other closely throughout, floating unison statements haloed in ECM's ethereal echo, long lines of graceful counterpoint that coax Wheeler into some highly considered, cerebral playing. Norma Winstone's control is remarkable; she has ease of execution that permits access from one extreme of her range to the other at a moment's notice and with inch-perfect intonation. Other-worldly in "Adios lony", haunting in "Dream/Lost Song", and dynamic in "February Daze" with her bat's squeak falsetto, it's the tracks without lyrics that are most successful.

"Who Are You?" has an angular melodic line with lyrics sitting awkwardly on intervals and "Breathtaking" eases into sprechgesang, the Schoenbergian hybrid of speech and singing, with "Windmills Of Your Mind" reflections which are at odds with the carefully balanced ensemble sound of the other six tracks. John Taylor's piano and organ underpin the instrumental flights of fantasy with a down-to-earth busy-ness, contrasting the legato horn and voice lines with staccato patterns and signposting harmonic change with two-fisted block chords. Supportive and introspective, he has time to stretch out on "Til Bakeblikk"; so clear and considered you can almost hear him thinking.

Stuart Nicholson

## MICHAEL MANTLER

Allen

(WATT 15)

Recorded: New York,

March–July 1985.

*Allen Parts 1–4.*

Mantler (t); Don Preston (synths).

MICHAEL MANTLER's music is unrelenting. This is the eighth LP he has overseen and written for WATT, the label he and his wife Carla Bley control, and taken together it's a gaunt and unwelcoming body of work. The settings of Pinter, Beckett and Gorey behind him, Mantler has lately returned to the instrumental; and here the cast is pared down to his own trumpet and the multiple synthesizers of former Zappa cohort Don Preston.

Allen therefore relies principally on electronics – but Mantler's grim vision is such that despite the glitter of all Preston's software and sequencers, the impression conveyed is one of pitch darkness. The trumpet takes only a small, circumspect part, a resigned voice inside the synthetics, leaving the keyboards to build a world of frost, thin air, blindness. Does this sort of music sound interesting? Actually, there are many arresting moments. Mantler varies the writing to overlap a crowd of small figures, smartly differentiated by Preston's choice of programmes, and Linn drum outbursts break open textures before they get too ponderous.

Unfortunately that Vangelis-style bombast has rendered this kind of LP commonplace. The music has an iron logic, and there's intelligence and severity in Mantler's composition. But something stifling too.

Richard Cook

## JALI NYAMA SUSO

Jali Nyama: Kora Music

From Gambia

(FMP SAJ-51)

Recorded: 5 July, 1984,

Berlin.

*Jula Dekaray; Alpha Yaya;*

*Dembo; N'Dambung*

*Saleya; Maley Sajo; Jali*

*Nyama.*

Jali Nyama Suso (kora, v).

## MALAMINI JOBARTHE & DEMBO KONTE

Jaliya

(STERN 1010)

Recorded: London, 1984 (7).

*Segou Tutu; Mbassi; Solo;*

*Bamba Bojang; Tutu Jara;*

*Fode Kaba; Cheddo.*

Malamini Jobarte &

Dembo Konte (kora, v).

## HERBIE HANCOCK & FODAY MUSA SUSO

Village Life

(CBS 26397)

Recorded: 7–9 August,

Shinano-Machi, Tokyo.

*Moon/Light; Ndan Ndan*

*Nyaria; Early Warning;*

*Kanante.*

Herbie Hancock (Yamaha

DX-1 Digital Synthesizer,

# Yamaha RX-11 Digital Drum Machine; Foday Musa Suso (Kora, Talking Drum).

**THE GAMBIAN** linguist Sidiya Jatta maintains that the word Jali has no precise European equivalent (he rejects musician or bard or the French griot): a Jali's social function is explicator and repository of custom, he argues, as well as the complex relationship between Praise and multiple patronage that informs his profession, simply reinforce the fact that the Jali is unique to Mandinka culture. So what happens when a Jali goes on tour?

Jali Nyama Suso appears to enjoy himself immensely at his solo concert in Berlin, and never more so than in "Jali Nyama", a 20-minute self-composition with subject the present performer (Hey, Bo Diddley!): a dark rich voice, and the simple kora accompaniment winds and jangles along around it.

The kora, a 21-stringed lute-harp, is one of those rare instruments where the two hands oppose each other in similar simultaneous action. As with the piano, it makes it a peculiarly fruitful solo instrument (with the added advantage of being portable). It sounds, because it is in a sense both these things, like a cross between a living musical box and an ancestor of the Spanish guitar: and its percussive strumming and mechanical flourishes are both of them additive.

Jaliya is a drier affair, perhaps a little more self-consciously historical, although the tone is also a matter simply of string-tuning, something very much down to the personal taste of the performer. With a brace of musicians, song and accompaniment can be turned into two-part inventions, with one musician playing the changes of some traditional piece, and the other improvising ("Segou Tutu" and "Tutu Jara" are alternative fantasies on the same theme). Modern-day etiquette of patronage requires (quite correctly) that Curators of the National Sound Archive (and writers of sleeve-notes) get special Praise-mention, so "Cheddo", ostensibly a lament for a tribal defeat, includes a brief nod to the tireless Lucy Duran. She points out, somewhat drily, in her notes, that most modern performances consist of words made up to suit the occasion and the audience, as the complete traditional narrative can last several hours, and are "only narrated if specifically requested".

Suso and Hancock are plainly taken to be a meeting of Ancient and Modern (note for example the perfect symmetry of the instrumental credits): but the usual complacencies this arrangement has given rise to are absent. For one thing Hancock, more than any other first-rank improviser, seems to work well only in a cast-in-situation, or under implacable guidance (let's face it, his work with Simple Minds was more interesting than the bulk of his 70s disco output: the point being that they were calling the shots in their project, and he was in charge on his own): Suso is an admirably ambitious and energetic musician, and it's he that throws the shapes in *Village Life*. The kora has a fairly narrow range of sonorities, the modern synthesizer an apparently limitless selection, so that the impression is given of Suso as anchorman, with Hancock reacting. Either way, the two interact

## Herbie Hancock and Foday Musa Suso



— Village Life —

across the full spectrum of harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, sonic and structural possibilities, and come up with a bewitching, glittering set of improvisations, as accessible and rewarding as anything Hancock's been involved in for a decade or more (and that includes his electro collaborations with Bill Laswell and Suso).

Mark Sinker

## LARRY CORYELL

Comin' Home (Muse MR5303)

Recorded: New Jersey, 7 February 1984.

*Good Citizen Swallow; Gloriette; Twelve And Twelve; No More Booze, Minor Blues; Confirmation; It Never Entered My Mind.* Larry Coryell (g); Albert Dailey (p); George Mraz (b); Billy Hart (d); Julie Coryell (v) on *It Never Entered My Mind* only.

LARRY CORYELL is a musician with more talent than he knows what to do with. One of the first off the mark with crossover music from inside jazz, his band Free Spirits presaged Electric Flag, BS&T and Miles. He made two almost-great fusion albums for Vanguard, *Spaces* and *Introducing 11th House*, and has recently transcribed three Stravinsky ballets for guitar on the Japanese Nippon/Phonogram label. But the net result of his endeavours over the years is to confirm the impression of unfulfilled potential; too often Coryell has been a dabbler, from fusion powerbands to acoustic projects with McLaughlin and Paco DeLucia.

Comin' Home is his first straight-ahead album since Lata Coryell with Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison of about 20 years ago; and, it must be said, it shows. His playing lacks the harmonic and rhythmic sophistication of a Pass, Farlow, Ellis or Kessel and instead is rooted in mid-60s Wes Montgomery, updated with flashy under-the-fingers runs. He has even turned the treble down to capture the Montgomery sound, but glibly comments on the liner notes "how surprised" he was anding up with a similar tone. Ho-hum. On "Confirmation" his brisk statement of the theme sounds decidedly uneasy but is salvaged by his busy solo. "No More Booze, Minor Blues" is suitably laid back and Montgomeryish, but there is a deeper seriousness to jazz than just change-running and nifty licks. A great degree of preparation on Coryell's part would have helped him begin to reclaim lost ground in

this area of jazz. It remains to be seen whether Coryell sticks with this, his latest foible, or moves on to his next "project". His wife Julie sings to her entire satisfaction on "It Never Entered My Mind", which just about sums up the approach.

Stuart Nicholson

## JAMES WILLIAMS

*Alter Ego* (Sunnyside SSC 1007)  
Recorded: New York City, July 19 & 20, 1984.  
*Black Scholars; Alter Ego; Havana Days; Fourplay; A Touching Affair; Waltz For Monk; Beauty Within.* James Williams (p); Kevin Eubanks (g); Billy Pierce (ts, ss); Bill Easley (as, ts, cl, fl); Ray Drummond (b); Tony Reedus (d).

IF A band can be said to have a personality, it is clear what is the alter ego of this James Williams outfit — the Jazz Messengers. In fact, both Williams and tenor player Bill Pierce are former associates of Art Blakey, having appeared on that artist's acclaimed *Album Of The Year* (1981) (Timeless SJP 155). Playing the Prince in this case is young Tony Reedus, nephew of the leader; his drumming is understated compared with Blakey's (but then whose isn't!), its sensitivity refuting charges of nepotism, I hasten to add.

The instrumentation is the most striking thing here. There are bebop clarinetists, it's true, but if you've been waiting for hard-bop clarinet this, in the person of multi-instrumentalist Bill Easley, is it! He is featured on that instrument on one of the best tracks, "Black Scholars" (composed, as are most of the numbers, by the leader) which opens and closes with an effective out-of-kilter vamp by the rhythm section which had your reviewer stamping his feet in irritation because he couldn't work out the beat.

The leader has a long and satisfying solo on "A Touching Affair", which is the best composition. As Williams himself notes in his helpful sleeve-note, the piece has an exotic Middle Eastern flavour, and the cadences are beautiful. "Fourplay" (quite) is an interesting little minor blues, but other compositions have a tendency to blandness, in particular the two by the leader's fellow-pianist Donald Brown (who should realize that you can't just write a piece in 3/4 time with a quirky opening, call it "Waltz For Monk" and expect it to capture "the spirit of Monk's compositions").

But this is an album which, while yielding no great surprises, is pleasant and satisfying overall.

Andy Hamilton

## VARIOUS ARTISTS Cornelius Cardew Memorial Concert

(Impetus IMP 28204 2LP)  
Recorded: Queen Elizabeth Hall, 16 May 1982.  
*First Movement for String Quartet; Octet '71; Treatise; Paragraph 1 Of The Great Learning; The Turtledove;*



## C H E C K

**The Workers Song; Thalmann Variations; Croppy Boy; Watkinson's Thirteens; Smash The Social Contract!; There Is Only One Lie; There Is Only One Truth; We Sing For The Future. Collective personnel.**

THIS IS a difficult album to review, in part because of the emotional occasion it records and in large part because, even now, it is impossible to judge Cornelius Cardew's music without reference to his politics. The two were and should be intertwined.

Cardew was struck and fatally injured by a hit-and-run driver in East London in December 1981. He was 35. Five months later, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, friends, comrades and fellow-musicians came together in tributes to him. It was an extraordinary moment far removed from the usual necrophilic showbiz of most such celebrations of a career. The album only identifies a collective personnel, not the performers on each piece. This is both faithful to Cardew's own collectivist sensibilities and to the mood of the occasion; though I was there, I can sincerely say that I don't remember who played what, and it hardly seems to matter. It was an occasion on which the personality of the composer seemed the most significant presence, even in its final absence, and on which the music—for all the many objective-aesthetic criticisms that have been levelled against it—attained a position of what might be called dynamic stasis, neither consolatory nor cathartic, nor explicitly exhortatory. If all this sounds overcooked, then it's fair to admit, too, that it's a mood that's largely lost on a badly recorded album that is going to have to serve more as a memorial than as a canonical record of a music that was continually in process.

That process, and the whole trajectory of Cardew's career, are the key to understanding him. Within it, he embraced a more or less conventional avant-garde approach, as can be heard on the post-serial "Movement For String Quartet" and the octet. It's already transformed in the visually-scored "Treatise" (and in "The Great Learning") into a concern with improvisatory procedures, an interest marked by Cardew's involvement with AMM and the Scratch Orchestra. However, as his politics became more developed, less philosophical, he grew increasingly suspicious of intellectual vanguardism. The temptation at that point is always to flop into vacuously populist modes. No composer, though, except perhaps Percy Grainger and Luciano Berio, has ever more radically reinvented folk forms than Cardew. The late songs and arrangements like "Croppy Boy" are extraordinary exercises in adaptation and innovation.

Berio has said: "The more simple and one-dimensional a musical discourse is, the more diffuse and immediate its relationship to everyday reality. The more concentrated and complex it is, the more complex and selective are its social relations and the more ramified its meanings." It was Cardew's achievement that he embraced—or attempted to—both sides of that uneven equation, to produce a

music that is genuinely popular and also genuinely complex.

For all sorts of reasons, I feel it was a mistake to release these tapes as an album (though I value the results enormously). The May 1982 concert was *sui generis*; repetition seems almost inappropriate. It might have been more satisfactory to have done some fresh recordings based on last year's Arts Council Contemporary Network tour Cornelius Cardew's Music and to mix some of the 1982 pieces—"Treatise", say, and "Great Learning"—with things like "East Is Red" and the solo "Mountains".

When Cardew died, the first Thatcher government, though its radical-Conservative colours were already firmly nailed to the mast, still retained some hint of old-fashioned consensusism. By the time of the concert, a scant five months later, the knives were getting sharpened and "wet" and "dry" entered the political lexicon as tokens of a new polarization of political will in Britain. Three more years later, the appearance of this album serves, if nothing else, to remind us of the foreshortenings of recent political history. Cardew couldn't possibly have liked Thatcher's Britain, though his presence might have helped change our perception of it from near-passivity and semi-complicity to refusal and action. What is undoubtedly true is that we would have seen in these times still clearer tokens of the way history reveals its oppositions and intentions. This is a valuable and moving document, and utterly timely.

Brian Morton



**PAUL BLEY**  
**Tango Palace**  
(Soul Note SN 1090)  
Recorded: Milan, 21 May 1983.

**Tango Palace; C.G.; Woogie; A.G.B.; But Beautiful; Return Love; Bound; Zebra Walk; Please; Explain. Bley (p).**

IF TEARS were the solo Bley at his most bare and parsimonious, *Tango Palace* is almost a sunshine collection. These solos persist with his minimal ways, themes that exist on the slightest of melodic premises—sometimes he seems like a slowed-down, ghostly doppelgänger of Mal Waldron, who shares Bley's task of exploring the shade of the same few notes and chords. In the sleeve-note, Bley is quoted to the effect that the average piano has only about 15 notes that sound good and useful. He lingers only over those tones.

And here the notes conjure music which, for Bley, is almost indulgently rhapsodic. "But Beautiful" is a ballad in still life, its chords ushered together, the design formal but quietly spontaneous; "Tango Palace", fractionally more embroidered, is piano music poised between song and dance. As so often with Bley, compositions which might be no more than a series of gestures take on the brittle beauty of coral: "Return Love" is like that, a complex thing made up of simplicities. There is some intellectual wit here too, especially in "Woogie", a splintery fantasy on frozen bits of boogie rhythm.

The arbitrary lengths explain something of Bley's creative consistency: "Bound" is two-and-a-half minutes, "Please" five, but durations are interchangeable. They're as long as they need to be. On this occasion, though, the lasting impression is of a quiet satisfaction in an austere world.

Richard Cook

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Louisiana Cajun Special**  
No. 1  
(Ace CH 141)  
Recorded: Ville Platte, Louisiana, 1962–1981.  
No session details.

BEFORE CRITICIZING cajun music, it is salutary to halt awhile and marvel that it is there at all.

But for an accident of history over 200 years ago, whereby the French-speaking population of Nova Scotia found itself transplanted to Louisiana, the extraordinary mélange of hillbilly, blues and French music would not have gestated. As it is, this outrageous hybrid, with lyrics sung sometimes in English and sometimes in fragmented French, a heavy, often blues-tinged backbeat and fiddle and accordion augmenting the standard guitar/bass/drums line-up, continues to hold its own in South Louisiana and East Texas.

That it does so is largely due to Floyd Soileau of Ville Platte. Since the 1950s, Soileau has recorded, produced and hustled his native music, with only occasional glimpses of real commercial success. Typical sales of only 3,000 for a local cajun hit mean that the music tends to be recorded hastily, without overdubs or elaborate production techniques; but this tends to enhance the earthy, spontaneous quality of pieces such as the sixteen offerings gathered here. This first cajun compilation from Ace Records concentrates on the brisk, jerky two-steps rather than the more esoteric waltzes. Most of the big names on the cajun circuit have recorded for Swallow Records at some time, and are thus represented in this well-compiled album. Pieces such as the Balfa Brothers' frothy and jocularly swinging "Pine Grove Blues" or Belton Richard's naked and unashamed boogie "Oh Lucille" are accepted classics of the genre, studded with jagged accordion and spiced with pithy French fiddle.

Even numbers which are more curious than classics, like the Sundown Playboys' "Saturday Night Special", amazingly released here on 45 by the Beatles' Apple label, or Nolan Cormier's "Hee Haw Breakdown", on which Cormier appears to be coaxing his mule and attacking his

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## C H E C K

accordion simultaneously, stand up as invigorating and individualistic music. This LP, which spearheads the first serious attempt to market cajun music in Britain since Sonet's brave plunge five years ago, is a worthy if not uniformly excellent collection, and merits the open-minded attention of those interested in American musical roots.

Mike Atherton

### BARRY HARRIS

**For The Moment**  
(Uptown UP27 20)  
Recorded: Live at the Jazz Cultural Theatre NYC, March 2, 1984.

*I Love Lucy Theme; To Monk With Love; My Heart Stood Still; Looking Glass; Chico The Man; Monk Medley (Reflections, Light Blue, Well You Needn't, Rhythm-a-ning); Save Some For Later; For The Moment.*

Barry Harris (p); Rufus Reid (b); Leroy Williams (d).

THE THREE greatest masters of bebop piano (Powell, Monk and Haig) are no longer with us, but Monk is commemorated on this album by the contemporary best suited to do so – and *For The Moment* shows just how good Barry Harris is. Forceful, thoughtful or impassioned, Harris in his 60s is, in the plaintive phrase of the jazz poll bestowing the jazz musician's proverbial bad lot, a 'talent deserving of wider recognition'. This album was recorded live at the Jazz Cultural Theatre, New York, in the founding of which the pianist has been a guiding light – this latter activity reflecting his concern with the future of the music.

The "Monk Medley" is notable for its length at an unusual slow tempo, while the title-track, an affecting unaccompanied ballad original, was played by the composer at Monk's funeral. With regard to the original "To Monk With Love" (pity about the title) – at last, a tribute to the composer which captures the essence and not merely the surface of his method! This excellent composition exhibits, as Monk was able to achieve, the consistent development of a single musical idea – in this case, a kind of crab-wise melodic movement based on the interval of a 2nd. My favourite track, however, is another original, the fearsome "Chico The Man" – even though I would have preferred it if the heavy Latin feel sustained by the drumming of Leroy Williams in the opening and closing statements could have been continued throughout the improvisation.

So – an excellent production deserving of wider purchase!

Andy Hamilton

*Love Comes Quietly; Old Song; The Warning; Juggler's Thought; Jack's Blues; Mind's Heart; Chanson; The End Of The Day; A Fold Song; The Traveller; Oh No; They Say; Heaven; Train Going By; The Eye; For No Clear Reason; The Rhythm; Night Time.*

Irene Aebi (v); Steve Lacy (ss); Steve Potts (as, ss); George Lewis (tb); Gyde Knebusch (hp); Barry Wedgell (g); Jef Gardner (p); J-J Avenel (b); Oliver Johnson (d, gongs and glock).

I HAVE to say this was my vote for best album of 1985, a point that would tend to make what follows rather redundant as far as value judgements are concerned.

However, it's worth setting out a detail or two about the circumstances of the album.

Lacy has long been interested in Robert Creeley's writing and the germ of this project, eventually premiered at the Festival de Lille in November 1984, was his participation in a radio programme about the American writer's work. *Futurities* is a setting for 20 short poems, each of them characteristic of Creeley's terse but emotive style, a profoundly American voice that hasn't yet received its due of attention over here. The festival performance featured lights, dancers and a superb 'alterpiece' by abstract painter Kenneth Noland (reproduced on the sleeve). The focus, however, remained with the poems and the set offers ample evidence of Lacy's ability as a song-setter; after the first performance, his first question was "Could you hear the words?", not a musician's usual first concern.

His companion Irene Aebi (heard elsewhere on violin and cello) has a superb voice, neither over-emotional nor over-precise. With such simple lyrics, nuance of performance is essential and she and the whole band never give less than sensitive readings. For the occasion, Lacy augmented his stage sextet with a harpist – needed for "Heaven" – and, for tonal balance, a guitarist and trombonist. Gyde Knebusch's contribution, on an awkward instrument, is delightful. George Lewis is, quite simply, one of the most important instrumentalists doing the rounds in new jazz. Lacy, never a grandstander, is content to take a restrained role, peaceful rather than introverted.

*Futurities* bears a kind of subtitle. Lacy likes to think of some at least of these tracks as "Steve's Standards". Each piece is complete in itself but also simple and open-ended; to each song, there's an introduction, verses and coda; and the introduction is repeated as the basis for improvisation. They are, literally, 'futurities', musical stock to be drawn on as time goes by.

If it's a romantic ambition to set out to write a standard, *Futurities* is a romantic work in every sense. It's a genuine labour of love, a celebration of a marriage, two parallel days set against the long stretch of time ahead, recollections stored up against the cold and the dark. Completely wonderful.

Brian Morton

### DEXTER GORDON

*One Flight Up*  
(Blue Note BST 84176)  
Recorded: 1964.  
*Tanya; Coppin' The Haven; Darn That Dream.*  
Gordon (ts); Donald Byrd (t); Kenny Drew (p); Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen (b); Art Taylor (d).

I MAY have been unduly influenced by Leonard Feather's sleeve-note insistence on this record being an example of the way presence in Europe relaxes jazz musicians, but I did find myself going to this music mainly to be soothed. The following criticism of Art Taylor, as a result, may not



be shared by listeners with a less passive attitude.

This is a warm, relaxed and always absorbing album packed with satisfying solos over a near-perfect rhythm section – I say near-perfect because Art Taylor is, for me, a little too staccato, often distracting attention from the smooth flow of the soloists. Side one is taken up entirely by "Tanya", an 18-minute track with a simple, insistent theme which Gordon examines unhurriedly. Byrd more dramatically. Pedersen and Drew are rock-solid throughout, but Taylor indulges in attention-grabbing stuttering too much when to be merely complementary would perhaps have been more appropriate. The same criticism applies to "Coppin' The Haven", where a rather more angular theme-statement is followed by a mellifluous Dexter Gordon solo and a typically strident one from Donald Byrd. Taylor's drumming is more suited to the latter – Gordon being ill-served by his continual clattering. Drew here plays a lovely quirky little solo, bouncing trails off an ascending left hand lagging teasingly behind the beat. "Darn That Dream" is a trio ballad, featuring Gordon gently caressing his way through the tune's possibilities with Taylor subdued on brushes and Drew rippling discreetly in the background.

Don't be put off by my giggling about Taylor – this is a fine album in the best Blue Note tradition.

Chris Parker

### STEVE LACY NINE

*Futurities*  
(hat ART 2022 2LP)  
Recorded: IRCAM, Paris 19/20 November 1984 and Berikon, Switzerland, 14–18 January 1984.  
*Sad Advice; The House;*

### TERJE RYPDAL

*Chaser*  
(ECM 1303)  
Recorded: Oslo, May 1985.  
*Ambiguity, Once Upon A Time; Geysir; A Closer*

**Look; Ørnen; Chaser; Transition; Imagi (Theme). Terje Rypdal (g, kybds on "Transition"); Bjørn Kjellemyr (b, elb); Audun Kleive (d, perc).**

A FAMOUS critic once ventured that he couldn't understand why Arnold Bennett should have wanted to write a novel like *Clayhanger*. The implication was that the book was far beneath Bennett's known abilities and far outside current literary fashion. It's tempting to take a similar line with Chaser.

Starting unforunately with the case for the defence: Rypdal is a fine and gifted musician who over a good number of years has contributed to some memorable sessions (and on a distinctly undervalued jazz instrument). It's been a received wisdom that he's better on other people's albums than as a leader, and his best work has been with the likes of Barre Phillips and as part of the John Surman-led Morning Glory. The quibbles have tended to come from the guitar: not-a-jazz-instrument kneejerkers or from those who have suffered one of Rypdal's over-amplified live aberrations.

Why, at this juncture, Rypdal should have chosen to make an album like *Chaser* is something of a mystery. There's nothing here that couldn't conceivably have been done in 1970, and nothing that would be beyond the technical reach of Richie Blackmore, while progress isn't always on a monorail forward, it's rarely found in a stylistic bunker either.

"Ambiguity" lacks anything of the sort. "Once Upon A Time" never gets its story told. "Geysir" seems a fair image of the whole thing: clockwork-regular, hot, explosive, very, very messy. Instrumentation like this was looking passé back in the days of The Groundhogs and Beck, Bogert & Appice. Rypdal and his men have done no more than cross the 's and dot the 's.

Perhaps the most damning tracks of all are those on the second side where the mood is varied to some extent.

"Transition" (to what?) introduces a bit of keyboards that might have lightened the darkness elsewhere. Outwardly the prettiest thing on the album, "Ørnen" completely fails to disguise the thinness of the material.

The (unrecorded) answer to the jibe about Bennett was, of course, that he wrote for a living. And *Clayhanger* made him the predictable bundle. There's little point constructing a big scene round Chaser. Though you might just get away with claiming that this is the corner — Stanley Jordan and Fred Frith apart — into which jazz guitar has played itself. But that seems like breaking butterflies on theoretical wheels. Rypdal has his living to earn and I've no doubt, me and Miss Jean Brodie, that this is for those that like that sort of thing.

Brian Morton

## LEE MORGAN

**The Gigolo (Blue Note BST 84212) Recorded: 1965. Yes I Can, No You Can't; Trapped; Speed Ball; The**

**Gigolo; You Go To My Head. Morgan (t); Wayne Shorter (ts); Harold Mabern Jr (p); Bob Cranshaw (b); Billy Higgins (d).**

THIS IS classic Lee Morgan: bright, toe-tapping jazz, accessible, direct and uncluttered. The titles are all his originals except the standard and his playing on all tracks is unfussy, unpretentious and often danceable — a little too unreflective for my taste. I prefer the more considered mood-building of Wayne Shorter.

"Yes I Can, No You Can't" is an easy-paced opener with a back-slapping beat; "Trapped" is more complex and provides a useful opportunity to compare the soloists: Wayne Shorter brisk but thoughtful, Morgan more haphazard, meandering, as is Harold Mabern. "Speedball" is a typical Morgan tune, perky and self-confident; the highlight here is Billy Higgins, who is strong, yet delicate and unobtrusive, providing a perfect complement to the soloists. The best track is "Gigolo", partly because the beat is more subtle than that of the other tunes. After a unison theme statement involving Mabern sounding strangely vibes-like, the pianist plays a deceptively simple-sounding solo, constantly referring back to the theme and embellishing the whole with startling trills and runs. Morgan is again bright, but ultimately not as absorbing, as Shorter, who is introspective, almost brooding, using insistent repetitions of evocative phrases to create tension. In this, he is beautifully complemented by the rhythm section, the whole sounding almost like the classic Coltrane Quartet at times. Higgins is at his best here, employing his trademark — the sudden punctuating side drum — to great effect. The track is, however, spoilt by a fade-out, of which there are too many on this album. The standard, "You Go To My Head", is played hauntingly, with a tinge of bossa nova.

As always, the sound-quality is Blue Note: fresh, sparkling and perfect.

Chris Parker

## RED GARLAND

**I Left My Heart . . . (Muse MR 5311) Recorded: Keystone Korner, San Francisco, May 1978. Will You Still Be Mine; Please Send Me Somebody To Love; Bye Bye Blackbird; Body And Soul (-I); Bag's Groove (-I); I Left My Heart In San Francisco (-I). Red Garland (p); Chris Amberger (b); Eddie Moore (d); Leo Wright (as-I).**

## KENNY BURRELL

**A La Carte (Muse MR 5317) Recorded: Village West, New York, 23 August 1983. I've Never Been In Love Before; Dreamy; Our Love; St. Thomas; Tenderly; I Thought About You; A La Carte. Kenny Burrell (g); Rufus Reid (b).**

THESE TWO Muse albums are reviewed together because, although superficially quite divergent — guitar/bass duo opposed to conventional piano trio with added sax — at a more fundamental level they have a central similarity. The writer Whitney Balliet once characterized jazz as 'the sound of surprise' and when the music is at its most inspired there is much in that epigram. Such moments in jazz are few and far between, however, and what is clearly discernible here is the far more common sound of people earning a living.

Within such a state of affairs one becomes aware of a nexus of expectations, from customers, from club owners, from the musicians themselves, from the record producer on such 'live session' dates as these, and therefore the assumed expectations of the listeners: what develops is an appreciation of the nature of musical conservatism (some would call it professionalism), the way in which the musical terms are broadly pre-determined but specifically renewed on a night-to-night basis. Details therefore vary, standards of performance possibly alter slightly, but the overall product is given and, to some extent, guaranteed.

All this is most overtly defined within the most conventional format, on Garland's album, but it is hardly less easy to discern in Burrell's case. Once or twice, on this record, there is a little of the 'sound of surprise' (check out, for instance, "Dreamy") but it is the kind of surprise that results in Looks Being Exchanged between the musos rather than that which causes listeners to spill their drinks.

Any further detailed comment seems therefore both irrelevant and redundant in the face of what has to be acknowledged in both cases as remarkable musical facility placed in the service of predictability, commerce and economic necessity.

Jack Cooke

## JIMMY GIUFFRÉ

**The Jimmy Giuffrè Clarinet (Atlantic 7 90144-1) Recorded: Hollywood, 21-22 March 1956.**

**So Low; Deep Purple (a); The Side Pipers (b); My Funny Valentine (c); Quiet Cook (d); The Shepherd (e); Fascinatin' Rhythm (f); Down Home (g). Jimmy Giuffrè (cl) with Harry Edison, Shorty Rogers, Jack Sheldon (t on g); Bob Cooper (ts on g, ob on c); Dave Pell (cor ang on c, ts on g); Maury Berman (bs on g, bsn on c); Buddy Collette (f on b, alt-cl on e); Bud Shank (alt-f on b); Harry Klee (bs-f on b, bs-cl on e); Jimmy Bowles (clst on a, p on f); Ralph Pena (b on c, d & g); Shelly Manne (d on b & f); Stan Levey (d on d & g).**

## THE JIMMY GIUFFRÉ 4

**Quasar (Soul Note SN 1108) Recorded: Connecticut, 3 & 5 May 1985. Quasar; Frog Legs;**

## C H E C K

**Phantom; Spirits; Wolf Soup; Shadows; 2nd Step; Night Ride.**

**Giuffrè (cl, ts, ss, f, bs-f); Pete Levin (kybds); Bob Nieske (b); Randy Kay (d).**

THESE TWO records were made 30 years apart and contain, apparently, entirely different musics, but Jimmy Giuffrè's calm vision binds them together. A couple of years ago I wrote in these pages about *Dragonfly*, the first LP by Giuffrè's current band, and found an old Trio LP to compare it with; the long-overdue reappearance of *The Jimmy Giuffrè Clarinet* allows the same trick with Quasar.

Although, that said, *Clarinet* remains one of the few completely unique jazz records. The only possible comparisons are with some of the (much later) work of Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton and Lol Coxhill; but in 1956 this must have seemed a bizarre experiment. Giuffrè works through eight quite different settings for his clarinet: solo in "So Low", with three flutes and drums in "The Side Pipers", with alto and bass clarinets in "The Shepherd", and with a penned-up big band octet in the gentle blues mockery of "Down Home". Giuffrè sets up as many different sorts of rhythm section as he does tone colours to work with, and the result is a strange, unrepeatable, leafy music that is somberly magical.



It seems to suggest summer and winter in the same breath. And it could have been no more than mannered hick impressionism if it weren't for the dogged way the clarinetist uncovers the sensibility of each combination. Against the ice cream chimes of Jimmy Rowles' celeste on "Deep Purple", for instance, he's huskily serpentine; in "Fascinating Rhythm" he's funky in a tired but amused way. All the thinking comes together in a carefully arranged version of "My Funny Valentine": written almost as a minuet for clarinet, oboe, cor anglais, bassoon and bass, it's a little masterpiece. Though the design is as formally perfect as a postage stamp, Giuffrè gently summons all the feeling in this demure melody.

Quasar, three decades on, finds him with flutes and saxophones as well as his clarinet; and a battery of electric keyboards and bass to co-exist with. The sensuous sound of *Dragonfly* is repeated here, with Levin's synthesizers fashioning a rippled veil of murmurs and Nieske's bass sumptuous in its tone. Each piece is a subtle truce between composition and improvisation. If there is cause for concern, it's that Giuffrè is no longer the dominant

instrumental voice, bowing usually to Levin; and perhaps a certain stylisation, a fixing of the group's stance, is becoming manifest. The same thing happened to Weather Report, but Giuffrè is still a far superior melodist to Zawinul, and he composes real tone pictures instead of resorting to exotically overblown funk. "Phantom" and "Shadows" are the most striking examples here: no one but Giuffrè could have imagined the whispered bass flute suffusing the lovely theme of the latter. These are both essential records.

Richard Cook

## DIDIER LEVALLET QUINTET

### Quiet Days

(Evidence EV 101)

Recorded: Amiens, 2, 3 & 4 June 1985.

Quiet Days (in Cluny);

Innocence; Sabbat; Honky Funk; For Harry Miller; Et De Nos Songses . . .

Tholo Peter Segona (t); Yves Robert (tb); Christ Biscoe (as, cl); Didier Levallet (b); Tony Marsh (d).

LEVALLET'S NAME is new to me; not only does he appear as leader and performer on this record, but all compositions and arrangements are attributed to him. I found it tempting at first to spend time cataloguing what bits of these tracks sound like who else – Mingus, Carla Bley, Max Roach can all be clearly identified, and there is once in a while a whiff of Gil Evans and even Todd Dameron, but quite quickly this pursuit came to seem somewhat pointless. This is mainly because all these styles are so openly used, as references neither dominating nor transcended by this eclectic but vigorous and coherent set. Levallet's work seems to live happily within a generous give-and-take relationship to the wider context of jazz composing.

Why it should succeed so well when similar albums have failed is maybe worth speculating upon. What is obvious, and no less important for that, is the clear commitment of the musicians involved here to make the music work, both as soloists and ensemble players, prodded on by Levallet's own playing. In a percussive, rapid-fire style that seeks always for a means of keeping things moving.

Supporting this, however, seem to be specifically French intellectual traditions, of the kind which produced such figures as Godard or Foucault; and certainly one could make a case for Levallet as an aspiring 'auteur'. But don't let that put you off, it's only my view and it is a good record.

Jack Cooke

## CHARLIE PARKER

**The Complete Savoy Sessions Vol. 2**

(Savoy WL70527)

Recorded: New York,

November 1945 &

Hollywood, December 1945.

Billie's Bounce; Now's The

Time; Thriving On A Riff;

Meandering; Koko; Dizzy

Boogie; Flat Foot Floogie; Popity Pop; Slim's Jam; Parker (as); Miles Davis (t); Dizzy Gillespie (t, p); Sadik Hakim (p); Carly Russell (b); Max Roach (d); Jack McVea (ts); Dodo Marmarosa (p); Slim Gaillard (v, p, g); Bam Brown (b); Zutty Singleton (d).

WHISTLES AND squeals, false starts, fragments, snakes, ladders, "Slim's Jam" and "Koko". It's all here.

I'm never very sure whether I like records that include several takes of the same tune – sometimes just a chorus or two, sometimes the full monty – and then annotate everything with little numbers, timings and liner notes that go on about dates and mystenes, largely ignoring the music. But *The Complete Savoy Sessions* is really a document as much as it is an album and, well, who can resist the dusty charms of a spot of archaeology every now and then?

Dust. These notes are illuminated by an uncommon brilliance. In fact, Volume 2 could well be the place to start listening to Charlie Parker, including as it does those paradigms of birdsong: "Billie's Bounce", "Now's The Time", "Thriving On A Riff", "Slim's Jam" and "Koko". In 1945 Parker sounds breathlessly enthusiastic, happy to be here, but tough. Dizzy's mostly on piano, Miles bat a sprog, and Slim Gaillard, whose personality spreads like a giant warm, dry hand over the bulk of side two, lightens the atmosphere, giving the record a social dimension.

Looked at from any angle, this album is pure desert island fodder: necessary, requisite and indispensable. When Parker burns off the excess gas at his entry in "Slim's Jam" (so beautifully casual) you know that Bam Brown's (?) shout of joy is no affectation. It's the kind of feeling you want to carry around in a drip-feed.

If you haven't already got it, buy it. But watch out for "Koko".

Nick Coleman

## KAZUMI WATANABE

**Mobo Club**

(Gramavision 18-8506-1)

Recorded: Tokyo, July–

September 1984.

Fu-Ren; Yokan; Tsuru-Kame

Hinatango; Kiken-Ga-Ippai;

Kyosei Seppun; Sat-Chan;

Circadian Rhythm; 2.

Watanabe (g, g synth,

emulator, v, tai-ko); Ichiko

Hashimoto (kbds, v); Greg

Lee (b); Ken Watanabe (b);

Shuichi Murakami (d);

Kiyohiko Semba (perc);

Mitsuru Sawamura (sax,

suzu); Akira Sakata (as, v)

## BILL CONNORS

**Step It**

(Cream)

Recorded: New York, June,

October 1984.

Lydia; A Pedal; Step It;

Cookies; Brody; Twinkle;

Titan; Flickering Lights;

Bill Connors (g); Tom

**Kennedy (el b); Dave Weckl (d); Steve Khan (g).**

**WITH FUSION** being a many splendoured thing these days, almost as diverse in body, soul and tentacle as Real Jazz (7), then so its idioms become more, not less, constraining. Time was when you could stick on one of those sexy early Grover Washington Kudu albums and know comfortably that the only real generic alternatives were either Herbie Hancock's school of cosmic kerplunk funk or the waspish sobriety of jazz-rock—as nasty a broth as ever was brewed by too many cooks.

Not so in the pan-gastronomical 80s; a decade in which Good Taste is both a complex and a catholic thing. Musical genre-lines have become as blurred as the Typical Consumer has become as unpredictable: shock-headed nineteen-year-olds buy Eric Dolphy records, while grizzled denizens of the ancient establishment wax lyrical over Stanley Jordan. Healthy stuff. Only ECM, with its eternal yuppie market, remains true to the old precepts of consumer fixity, continuing to tailor the bulk of its product/packaging to the diluvian curve of the upwardly mobile. But diversity may breed discontent if it's allowed to become self-conscious, to become an end in itself.

Kazumi Watanabe wears sharp jackets and plays a sticky brand of techno-fractured guitar. In true Gremavision style *Mobo Club* comes on as being both highly serious and of great substance. Sadly, despite being interesting, it's a frustrating record of dubious substance that winds up taking itself far too seriously. Watanabe's guitar seldom sounds anything like a guitar, and, of course, this is not necessarily a bad thing. But, as strategies go, it reveals much about the man and his motivations. Wedged between metallic boink-boink synth punctuations and a drum/bass axis that seems slightly alarmed, the instrument always sounds like a remnant; the shards of a musical voice dislocated by too many clever ideas and novel noises. Only on the Oriental "Sat-Chan" is the music allowed any room to breathe. Given the furious rhythmic swirl of Prime Time, or even perhaps a more straight-laced funk underbelly, then *Mobo Club* might get away with its conceits. As it stands it sounds like a rather naff hi-tech patchwork quilt: all stitching.

Bill Connors operates at the other end of the Fusion guitar continuum: a guitar/bass/drum trio recorded *au naturel* in one of those stark converted-chapel studios in New York. Whereas with Watanabe you get the impression that it's the technology you're meant to be listening to, Bill Connors insists that you dig his fluid musicianship, his chops. To this end he parades the styles of a clutch of electric guitarists—to wit: Holdsworth, Stern, Scofield and (particularly) Steve Khan—bonds those noises together with his own slippery-fingered glue and presents you with a package that is unquestionably impressive but also rather uneventful: like a Formula One motor-race in which no-one runs off the track, no-one breaks down and the cars finish in the order in which they left the starting grid.

Neither record could legitimately be

considered bad, but that, I think, is part of the problem. With technology, and the way in which it affects technique, being unassailably 'significant' in the chase for new sounds, the simple humanity of The Voice takes something of a caning in this particular race—and with it, the possibility of that most precious commodity: human failing.

I like records that are full of interpenetration, bad language, and unclean odours as well as beauty, poise and polish. So long as music is preoccupied solely with problems of style, of sounding interesting only within the context of other music, then it stands still. Or worse still; it disappears up its own de-odorized backside.

Nick Coleman



## JEAN-PIERRE MAS

**Trapèze (JMS 036, distributed Cadillac)**  
**Un Bus Pour Tabarka:**  
**Miroir; Isola Piste Rouge, Trapèze; Tabar; Le Magicien D'Owl; Dindou No. 4; Au Sec . . .**  
**Mas (p, DX7, perc); André Ceccarelli (d, perc); Henri Texier (b); Eric Barret (ts, ss).**

I CONFESS to never having heard or heard of Mas before this. On the showing of *Trapèze*, however, he's a fine and distinctive player, well worth watching out for. The music is strongly coloured with a non-jazz influence (Morocco or Algeria, I'd guess) that gives it a haunting expressive range.

It's atmospheric rather than particularly demanding and there's little sense that any of the players is stretching himself unduly. Barret, though far from being a mawkweight, is largely limited to adding tonal variation over the leader's unhurried piano. Particularly intriguing are the opener "Tabarka" and "Le Magicien D'Owl" which are, I suspect, the kind of thing William Burroughs and Brian Gysin hear in their heads (all) the time.

Give them a shout at Cadillac—180 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2—and get hold of a copy. The pleasantest surprises are often the lowish key ones.

Brian Morton

## THE GUEST STARS

**Out At Night (Guest Stars GS 11)**  
**Recorded: Berks.**

**September 1985.**  
**Montezuma's Mother; Miles Apart; Amy's Bounce; What Means Love; The Wind Is Getting Angry; Song Of The Bridge; Uranus In Jeopardy; Birds Of A Feather.**  
**Deirdre Cartwright (g); Josefina Cupido (d, v); Laka Daisical (p, v); Linda De Mango (congas, perc); Alison Rayner (b, v); Ruthie Smith (saxen, v); Isabella Cupido (castanets).**

**ONE WISDOM** is that the Guest Stars are a great live band who don't quite make it on record. If that applied to the eponymous predecessor *Guest Stars*, it hardly does here. There's just the right mixture of rawness and polish, spontaneity and 'finish', to guarantee that what appears on disc is something more than watered-down stage act.

I'm still not 100% sold on the voices, though Ruthie Smith tugs at the heart on "What Means Love", the best thing on the album for my money. The music is still basically dance-oriented but there are growing signs of a more sophisticated approach to the writing.

I know they're a touring band and a close-knit unit but for future albums I'd like to see them import a few guest stars to beef up the horns and keyboards. But that's carping. This is an excellent, thoroughly enjoyable album and, self-financed as it is, an example to those who complain about label pressures and producer auterism.

Brian Morton

## BOB CROSBY

**Accent On The Bobcats (Affinity AFS1014)**  
**Recorded: New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, 1937–42.**  
**Gin Mill Blues; Squeeze Me; Who's Sorry Now; South Rampart Street Parade; Yancey Special; I Hear You Talking; Call Me A Taxi; I'm Prayin' Humble; Mournin' Blues; Till We Meet Again; The Love Nest; Washington And Lee Swing; Spain; All By Myself; Jazz Me Blues; Tin Roof Blues.**

**Large and small (Bobcats) personelles variously featuring Yank Lawson, Billy Butterfield, Sterling Bose (t); Floyd O'Brien (ts); Eddie Miller, Irving Fazola (reeds); Matty Matlock, Gil Rodin, Deane Kincaide (reeds, arr); Joe Sullivan, Jess Stacy. Bob Zurke (p); Nappy Lamare (g); Bob Haggart (b, arr); Ray Bauduc (d).**

**VERY POPULAR** in their day, both Crosby crews, the big band and the Bobcats, had a role in the renewal of interest in earlier jazz styles that took place in the late 1930s, moving against the main current of swing. With only four tracks here by the larger ensemble, the Bobcats predominate, but it is possible to take the view that the big band was the more valuable group. "South

## C H E C K

Rampart Street" may have been made agonizingly familiar by latter-day combs catering to the nostalgia trade, yet this Haggart composition and arrangement is, in its initial form, a fine evocation of traditional form and expression. The point that these musicians were never mere revivalists would have been reinforced if "Downtown Blues", "Chain Gang" and "Jimgtown Blues" had been included.

Of the remaining tracks by the larger group "Yancey Special", an unimaginative adaptation of Meade Lux Lewis's famous boogie tribute, fails to come off. "Gin Mill", originally recorded as a piano solo by Joe Sullivan in 1933, fares better, and Zurke, who was praised by Jelly Roll Morton, is heard to advantage here and on "Squeeze Me". He also comes through well on the two quartet items, "I Hear You Talking" and "Call Me A Taxi", as does Miller. The latter was, on tenor saxophone, probably the bands' most consistent soloist, though Fazola, one of the great clarinetists of jazz and surprisingly little written about, scaled more commanding heights, as in "Spain" or "Washington And Lee Swing". Butterfield also stands out on the latter and in "Love Nest", and there is more good trumpeting, plunger muted, from Bose on "I'm Prayin' Humble", another excellent Haggart score, this time derived from gospel music. Despite the contributions of Miller and Zurke, a track such as "Who's Sorry Now?" does underline Eric Thacker's comment on the "rather slick mobility of the Bobcats", yet the main strength of these performances, as this paragraph should have made clear, lies in the solos.

One Marion Mann bursts into song during "All By Myself", but the sleeve gives no warning of this.

Max Harrison

eventually, the 'mismatch' became the source of substantial interest and some excitement (and I had to re-write the review).

Their version of Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring" is a particularly fine example of the 'complementary' approach. Remler plays the theme and opens out into a superb solo (though the guitarists are not on separate channels their styles really are distinct enough to discern who's leading most of the time). She mixes slow lines, fast lines and chords, showing she's every bit as agile as Coryell but more selective with her notes and less prone to the occasional jazz-rock cliché. When Coryell takes over, smooth as an Olympic baton change, he's immediately sharper, bluesier and more ambitious with time, which makes his playing that much more exciting. He gets the meatier accompaniment though. Whereas he played mostly bass lines behind Remler, she plays bass and chords, elasticating the tempo when occasion demands; she really is listening rather than just waiting. Finally, on one of the all too rare occasions on the album, they both take off into an improvised double lead with delightful, fugat effect.

Coryell's reputation is already made. He's done duos before, with Philip Catherine and Steve Khan. This is at least as good, better in the case of the Catherine albums (I equivocate only because I've never heard the Khan one). It's Remler's first recording in the genre and strengthens the impression made by her quartet albums, of a piquant talent developing quickly. I hear she's done gigs in the States with our own Martin Taylor. That's an album I would love to hear.

Steve Lewis

instrumentation comes first or later is a more general question, not at issue here.

Green has found a bassist who exactly complements his own style. Recognizably in a line with the Coherents' Marcio Mattos, Roberto Bellatalla is still his own man, with an impressive technique. The vigorous strumming behind the soprano in the climax of the long "Orient Hearing" gives a sense of some hitherto-undiscovered scion of the string family. Elsewhere, he and Hession work together with remarkable understanding and discipline; it's a kind of music that demands both if it isn't to become shapeless; here, each of the tracks declares itself with precision.

The analogy with Amalgam still seems a fair one. The improvisation, notably on tracks like "Nutmeg And Lace" and "Plain Speaking" itself seems less seat-of-pants than measured and thoughtful. Green's Inside Out were a slight disappointment at the Seven Dials Saxophone Festival in the summer, but only because they didn't seem to have registered the audience's presence. On record, that's less likely to be a problem given the technical constraints, and the inwardness of this music is a positive virtue.

There's a reviewer's law that dictates you can't pan something without finding at least one saving grace (a nice sleeve, or something). Equally, it leaves you a bit uneasy to offer unstinted praise. So, just to show willing, I'd say that Green's flute playing – on "Wind Up" – leaves me rather cold. It's his least effective instrument. Plainly speaking, though, this is one of the best things I've heard in a long while. It joins the Coherents' "K'tah" on the regular playlist.

Brian Morton

## LARRY CORYELL & EMILY REMLER

Together

(Concord CJ 289)

Recorded: San Francisco, August 1985.

*Arabian Nights; Joy Spring; Ill Wind; How My Heart Sings; Six Beats, Six Strings; Gerni's Blues; How Insensitive.* Larry Coryell & Emily Remler (g).

**GUITAR DUOS** – I love 'em. As I see it there are two types. The ones where the styles and backgrounds of the musicians blend so homogeneously it's hard for anyone but the occasional smartarse to tell who's playing what (I guess Stanley Jordan has just taken this vein as far as it can go!) And the ones where the styles and backgrounds are diverse but complementary, so that individual characteristics remain audible. The Stefan Grossman/John Renbourn pairing is my favourite example; Coryell and Remler are of this ilk and almost as good.

Mind you, this appreciation did not dawn immediately. I have to admit to thinking it rather a mismatch at first. But this album's a grower if ever there was one and the harder I listened the more I got out of the contrast and interplay between Remler's decidedly smoother, subtle style and Coryell's altogether snappier playing. Till,

## GREEN/BELLATALLA/HESSION

Plain Speaking

(Prime PLP 02)

Recorded: 1985.

*Plain Speaking; Orient Hearing; Nutmeg And Lace; Call Up; And Phoenix; Wind Up; Heptic.* Chris Green (as, ss, ts, b, clt, f); Robert Bellatalla (b); Paul Hession (perc).

**THERE HASN'T** been a sax-lad trio this good in Britain since Amalgam recorded *Prayer For Peace*. Chris Green comes very much in the Trevor Watts mould: the same tendency to the elegiac, the same drawn-out quality (nothing like a Coltrane's harmonic psychomachia, but a narrative unfolding). Green first caught my eye with the very excellent Coherents. In this sparer setting, minus Gerry Gold's trumpet and Akemi Kuhn's piano, he's heard to even better advantage.

He differs from Trevor Watts, of course, in the range of instruments he plays. Where Watts has stuck by and large to alto and soprano, Green doubles up with tenor and bass clarinet and turns now and again to flute. There's no sense, however, of the quick-change act in this (the constant risk for the multi-instrumentalist, one not even Braxton's safe from). On each horn he is identifiably himself, on each cut, the instrument is appropriate to the task at hand. Whether, in improvised music,

## BILLY BANG SEXTET

The Fire From Within

(Soul Note SN 1086)

Recorded: New York, 19 & 29 September 1984.

*The Glow Of Awareness; The Nagual Julian; The Shift Below; Petty Tyrants; The New Seers; The Mold Of Man; Inorganic Beings.* Ahmed Abdullah (t); Billy Bang (vln); Oscar Sandees (g); William Parker (b); Thurman Barker (marim); John Betsch (d); Charles Bobo Shaw (cowbells on track 2).

**DESPITE THE** hefty titles, this is really a good-natured blowing session spiced by a mild snifter of the esoteric. Suitable, perhaps, for the source of the song names – all are derivations from cult mystic Carlos Castaneda.

Although this might not be one of his 'important' records, it's clear that Bang has developed into a significant voice. While still pedalling on the rosewood elegance of the violin's sound he has the bite, swing and attack of a brass player in full flight. The improvisations in "Awareness" and "Petty Tyrants" lash mightily through the quick tempos but hold on to his dabonair side; in a slow piece like "The Shift Below" he is slyly sweet where Leroy Jenkins would be brilliantly coarse. If he lacks



something of Jenkins' emotional range – so far I can't see Bang making a record as good as Leroy's magnificent Solo Concert – this fiddler has plenty to say that's fresh.

Although his themes here are actually a bit staid, Abdullah sounds solitary but excellent inside the group, playing some very truthfully-turned solos, and the unusual colours come from Barker's marimba and Sandeas' guitar – the latter a rust metal Chicagoan sound. They don't add much, just a few interesting fringes, if you like Bang's music, an engaging set.

Richard Cook

## HANK MOBLEY

*Hi Voltage*

(Blue Note BST 84273)

Recorded: 1967.

*High Voltage; Two And One; No More Goodbyes; Advance Notice; Bossa De Luxe; Flirty Gerty.*

Mobley (ts); Blue Mitchell (t); Jackie McLean (as); John Hicks (p); Bob Cranshaw (b); Billy Higgins (d).

**SURE, IT'S** a formula. First listening to *Hi Voltage* might well cause the eyes to roll back like cherries on a one-armed bandit, the mind to un-couple from its locomotive body, un-oiled limbs to creak. It has that sound: The Blue Note Machine; the great record label that never recovered from its hit record.

But then after a while you start to hear the music bound into the fabric of these fierce, corny structures and the pleasure imitates the ordering of a fine meal: you know what sort of food you're going to eat, but dare you really predict its nuances of taste?

But let's not get too precious about this. Higgins swishes along like a breeze, as ever, while everyone else rides his cymbals in breezy, friendly fashion. All except McLean, who leaks battery acid and contention in equal proportion to Mobley's bell-like nobility. This is Jackie at his lemon-sucking, I-can-do-this-sorta-thing-in-my-sleep-but-I'm-fucked-if-I'm-going-to-deal-in-half-measures best, mixing his patented droopy phrasing with sizeable dollops of post-Parker psychorama till water starts from the eyes (just check the fabulous "Bossa De Luxe"). Mitchell is suave, while Hicks succeeds in being casually weird: not very funny, but not lacking in imagination either.

Of course this is formula stuff: if you want Hank's real creative oeuvre then listen to *Soul Station*. But if, like me, you also enjoy the disciplined stretching of familiar forms, then *Hi Voltage* is a simple pleasure. If it tastes good, I'll eat it.

Nick Coleman

## BENNY GOODMAN

*Clarinetitis/The Young B.G. (Affinity AFS 1018)*

Recorded: Chicago/New York, 1927–34.

*Clarinetitis (a); After Awhile (b); Dinah (d); A Jazz Holiday (b); Jungle Blues (b); The Sheik Of Araby (d);*

*Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble (d); How Come You Do Me Like You Do? (d); Blue (b); Muskrat Ramble (b); Room 1411 (b); That's A Plenty (a); Indiana (b); Shirt-Tail Stomp (b); Sugar (e); Crazy 'Bout My Gal (c); Wolverine Blues (b); Railroad Man (c). Goodman (cl, as, bs) with Trio (a); Benny Goodman's Boys (b); Irving Mills & His Hotsey Totsy Gang (c); Red Nichols & His Five Pennies (d); Adrian Rollini & His Orchestra (e).*



**ANYONE WHO** only knows Goodman from his work inside the swing monarchy will find this LP surprising. The earliest tracks date from his 17th year, and they display a precocious kid doing his best to strut in the Chicago blues manner of Johnny Dodds – not a bad try at that. His clarinet tone is harder, his phrasing more rushed and effortful than it would later become, but there are already glimmers of the sophisticated Goodman would master in the best of his 30s recordings.

The sides under Goodman's own name are small group records with a collegiate flavour. His Boys are a brash, clumsy band who take blundering stabs at the two Morton tunes: Jimmy McPartland, who would mature into a brass player of real grace, here perspires under the strain, although he manages to sound off a fair echo of Bix Beiderbecke in "A Jazz Holiday". This is Dixieland before Dixieland was coined, nothing like as strong as Bix's Gang or Miff Mole's Molers; it's more like a gauche white counterpart to the barrelhouse music of Jimmy Blythe and Jimmy O'Bryant. The tracks with Nichols' Five Pennies (who vary from ten to 12 in number here) are in a different league, and although Goodman's playing is increasing in fluency – the "Indiana" solo is particularly fine – he is consistently overshadowed by Jack Teagarden, whose sparse wit and blue heat turn up the music every time his trombone steps in. The title with Rollini's orchestra, made four years after anything else here, finds both musicians playing well, and the music hints of a new era about to get under way.

Goodman sounds like a bright, garrulous young man on all these tracks, sometimes overplaying (like Jimmy Dorsey) but always ambitious in a way that one can applaud. At the close, though, you realize you've heard no melancholy, which puts him at a distance from Bix or Teagarden. This is a useful set to partner his recordings

with Ben Pollack's band from the same period (still available, I think, on French RCA), but a serious flaw is the misguided attempt to programme the tracks in the order listed above. Strict chronology would have made much more sense.

Richard Cook

## DIDIER LOCKWOOD

*Out Of The Blue (JMS 037)*

Recorded: Skyline Studio, New York, April 1985.

*Legs; Cello Britten; Martinique; I Can't Tell You To Begin; November Song; Out Of The Blue; Round About Midnight; B-Train Blues.*

Didier Lockwood (vln); Gordon Beck (p); Cecil McBee (b); Billy Hart (d).

**SINCE THE** death of Zbigniew Seifert, and the decline of Jean Luc-Ponty, Frenchman Didier Lockwood has probably been the leading exponent of jazz violin in that central tradition growing first from swing, then from bebop. The tonal limitations of electric violin lend a certain sameness to all his playing on *Out Of The Blue*, but do not disguise the considerable virtuosity behind his elegant, flowing lines. The album's greatest asset, however, lies in the marvellous contribution of the rhythm section.

Most of the music is rooted firmly in a modern bop idiom, which suits Gordon Beck just fine. The pianist shares solo responsibility with Lockwood on most cuts, including two of his own compositions. It is he who unfailingly brings the music back into line when the violinist has strayed off into Gallic swing (on "Legs") or the gypsy-style passages of "Cello Britten", with their inevitable, and presumably intentional, echo of Grappelli. Billy Hart and the great Cecil McBee provide both drive and subtlety throughout.

Interestingly, "Out Of The Blue" itself sounds like nothing else on the album, throwing off the formal constraints of other tracks and letting the players cut loose in a freer, more abstract style to great effect; McBee in particular plays like a man possessed, although Beck sounds happier elsewhere. It is the most adventurous cut on an album which generally seems aimed at the kind of mainstream crossover audience implied in the stylish sleeve. If its final effect is rather repetitious, that is largely down to the instrument; violin will always be essentially a sideshow in the jazz fairground.

Kenny Mathieson

## LOOSE TUBES

*Loose Tubes (LTP 001)*

Recorded: London, December 1984;

*September–October 1985. Eden Express; Rowing Boat Delineation Egg; Descarga; Descarga Occurancia; Yellow Hill; Mister Zee; Arriving.*

Dave DeFries, John Eacott, Chris Batchelor, Lance Kelly, Steve Waterman (t); John



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**Harborne, Steve Day, Richard Pywell (tb); Ashley Slater (bs tb); Iain Ballamy, Steve Buckley (as, ss); Tim Whitehead, Mark Lockhart (ts); Dave Bitelli, Howard Turner (bs); Eddie Parker (f); Django Bates (kbds, melod); Dave Powell (tba); John Parricelli (g); Steve Berry (b); Nic France (d); Steve Arguelles (perc).**

**YOU'LL HAVE** to excuse a tyro such as myself for culling theories that may not exactly be hot news to you, but it has come to my attention that something's afoot in British jazz and Loose Tubes seem to represent the essence of it.

They're probably the cream of a rising generation of musicians, based mostly in London, that is beginning to make a distinctively 1980s British music out of jazz. Typically this music is accomplished but deliberately unpolished, marked by a lively but reverent humour and very very eclectic. David DeFries, one of the band's impressive horn section, has talked about London becoming "an unfolding crucible of world sub-cultures", and I'm sure this is a major factor.

Theories apart, though, let me tell you: this album is a joy. Over and above the musical finesse there is a sense of fun and enthusiasm about it that converted me instantly, highly prejudiced though I am against all "big band" music. The arrangements, mostly by Bates and Berry, writhe and slither about. Calm combo playing builds through richly textured ensemble work to all-out blowing, then relaxes. The rhythms hiss, thump and tap to match, from Latin to West Indian to rock. Not that the Afro-American tradition is dispensed with or even subdued. "Rowing Boat Delineation Egg" is a roustabout number that goes through a sort of history of the genre in four minutes flat, from ragtime to harmonolodics; and "Arriving" is a gorgeous slow eight-bar featuring the ultra-versatile Bates on melodica (he wrote three numbers, solos on three — come on Django, it's your band really isn't it?) And it's not that you can stop the music and say there's a clave, that's reggae, either.

For what these albums have done is to make out of all these influences and nuances a collective ebullience which is uniquely their own (undeniably), uniquely British (arguably) and which stands a unique chance of becoming genuinely popular (well, relatively). Loose Tubes were on *The Tube* last month. Which is good for them, good for *The Tube* and of interest to all of us who, stick-bound, are indebted to Charles Fox's *Jazz Today* for regular glimpses of the promised land. If Jools Beckons, can Wogan be far behind?

Steve Lewis

## HERMAN CHITTISON

### Master Of Stride Piano

#### 1933-41

**(Meritt 20)**  
**Recorded:** New York City, 17 July 1933.  
**Unlucky Blues; My Four Reasons.**  
**Chittison (p); Ikey Robinson (b), v.**

**Recorded:** Paris, 22 May 1934.  
**Honeysuckle Rose; Bugle Call Rag; Swingin'; Harlem Rhythm Dance; Nagasaki; You Gave Me Everything But Love.**  
**Chittison (p).**

**Recorded:** Paris, 2 June 1934.  
**Swingin'; Stormy Weather; St Louis Blues; You'll Be My Lover; Red Jill Rag; Bugle Call Rag.**  
**Chittison (p).**

**Recorded:** Paris, 9 June 1934.  
**Trees.**  
**Chittison (p).**

**Recorded:** Paris, 13 June 1938.  
**My Last Affair/No More Tears; I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket; My Own Blues; They Can't Take That Away From Me.**  
**Chittison (p).**

**Recorded:** New York City, 17 September 1941.  
**Flamingo; The Man I Love.**  
**Chittison (p).**

CHITTISON WAS a potentially major figure in the history of jazz. Born in the same year as Art Tatum, 1909, he is the only pianist of that generation who can realistically be compared with the great man, although their music is substantially different. He did not record enough, and the above LP, though it should be heard in conjunction with the 1944-5 items on Musicraft MVS506, may be regarded as the crucial representation of his work. It includes some hitherto exceedingly rare, and unissued, tracks, although the earliest two are merely curiosities. To Robinson's crude singing and cruder banjo plunking Chittison adds accompaniments whose grace and elegant elaboration make them sound like ironic commentaries.

On the first Paris session we hear a virtuoso reading of the New York stride piano style, with extreme rapidity and unflinching accuracy as the chief factors. The integration of varied bass figures with the right hand's teeming notes is extraordinary, above all in "Nagasaki" and the first account of "Bugle Call Rag", this latter done as a run-away *perpetuum mobile*. On all six tracks, however, the tightly packed notes dance in taut agitation, their organization often being highly ingenious, with overtones of 'novelty' piano music.

Few could match Chittison's achievement on the second Paris date, but he is less concerned with sheer speed and the music is less headlong, more swinging. The second versions of "Bugle Call Rag" and "Swingin'" are superior, the former's extreme rapidity notwithstanding, and there is much spectacular rhythmic jugglery. "Stormy Weather" is transmuted, remarkably, into a stomping dance yet one full of airy filigree. There is not much of the blues in "St Louis", but this is a further demonstration of Chittison's amazing

range of keyboard resource, and is completely independent of Tatum's recording of the previous year.

The 1938 session is one of the memorable occasions in the annals of recorded piano jazz. Although the player's technique is just as fully engaged it is less explicitly so, and the music has a less athletic, more sensuous impact. A harmonic insight only hinted at before emerges, and there is much more elaboration of texture. With superior recording a wider variety of touch is evident, in fact a greater diversity of nuance in every sense: consider the several carefully related tempos used during "Eggs In One". "My Own" is a real blues, albeit a sophisticated one, and "Take That" is perhaps the finest single performance here, representing, as do the two New York solos, Chittison's full maturity. In these latter the bravura takes on a curious air of understatement, partly because so much is crowded, without distortion, into small spaces. This is an unmissable LP.

Max Harrison

**HERBIE HANCOCK**  
**Empyrean Isles**  
**(Blue Note BST 84175)**  
**Recorded:** 1964.  
**One Finger Snap; Olioqui Valley; Cantaloupe Island; The Egg.**  
**Hancock (p); Freddie Hubbard (c); Ron Carter (b); Anthony Williams (d).**

EMPYREAN ISLES was the first of two albums (Maiden Voyage being the other) in which Herbie Hancock composed a series of pieces around a written programme, supplied on the sleeves by Nora Kelly. They are not really, as some critics have suggested, genuine tone-poems; while the connections can be made, the music would happily stand on its own.

The opening two tracks are the most conventional, with the quartet in fine form — Hubbard in particular demonstrates what a good player he could be when not seduced into empty grandstanding. The album's strongest track, "Cantaloupe Island", most overtly presages Hancock's imminent drift (via Miles) into fusion music, and provides a useful reminder that that what we have come to think of as fusion exists as a style — and is increasingly being heard again now — quite irrespective of electric instrumentation.

Hancock aimed at compositions which involved the group in a form of collective improvisation in lieu of the "missing" register of tenor saxophone, most obviously on the longest cut, "The Egg", in which there is almost no ensemble melody at all, but considerable free improvising. Both these albums have worn surprisingly well; they gain additional fascination from hearing Hancock lay the foundations of what was to become a hugely influential style by the decade's end.

Kenny Mathieson

**JOE HENDERSON**  
**Our Thing**  
**(Blue Note BST 84152)**

**Recorded: 1963.**

*Teeter Totter; Pedro's Time; Our Thing; Back Road; Escapade.*

**Kenny Dorham (t); Joe Henderson (ts); Andrew Hill (p); Eddie Khan (b); Pete La Roca (d).**

I THINK this is one of those LPs you have to learn how to love: an example of hard bop craftsmanship honed to such a degree that its very tenseness becomes a kind of perfection. Though it's in Joe Henderson's name, this is really a group record, and – paradoxically – one that owes much to the quiet brilliance of Andrew Hill.

Frontmen Henderson and Kenny Dorham were both stylists, adept at their respective instruments, but dealing in the common language of bebop; Hill, on the other hand, was a restructuralist, a man trying to forge his own musical language out beyond bebop; you can hear this process happening on *Our Thing*, and it's what makes the record stick.

Henderson and Dorham blow with cool economy, and their compositions are catchy if unremarkable tunes; at first hearing, everything glides along, bebop refined to a light, strolling elegance... then you start to listen to Andrew Hill. His piano not only mediates between horns and rhythm section in a neatly oblique way, his solos hint at the darker, more turbulent imagination his own recordings later revealed. His achievement here, though, is to create his little disturbances while respecting the confines of the bop ensemble: he holds things together, maintains a modest profile, yet adds just enough dissonance to keep the listener constantly alert.

It's no surprise that Hill went on to make strikingly original and complex records, while Henderson and Dorham pretty much remained in a stylistic cul-de-sac – expert talkers, but with little new to say. That's a harsh judgement, perhaps, but if you listen to "Escapade" here, you'll see what I'm talking about – it's Hill's touch which transforms a pleasant Kenny Dorham tune into something mysterious and compelling. Leonard Feather's sleeve notes refer to "Hill's spare chords and unpredictable intervals"; I'd just call it genius.

Graham Lock

## MEL POWELL

**Mel Powell And His Uptown Gang**

(Phonastic NOST7649)  
**Recorded: England (perhaps Bedford), 28 July–December 1944.**

*The Earl; Sweet Lorraine; Makin' Whoopee; Blue Skies; Confessin'; I'll Remember April; Lady, Be Good; As Long As I Live; Night In Tunisia; Shandy; Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone; My Guy's Come Back; One, Two, Button Your Shoe; Way Down Yonder In New Orleans; Triple X; Sweet Georgia Brown.*  
**Bernie Privin (t); possibly Glenn Miller (tb); Peanuts**

**Hucko (cl, ts); Powell (p); Carmen Mastren (g); Trigger Alpert (b); Ray McKinley or Frank Ippolito (d).**

**The Unavailable Mel Powell (Pausa PR9023)**

**Recorded: Los Angeles, 10 December 1947.**  
*Anything Goes; Way Down Yonder In New Orleans; You Go To My Head; You Better Not Mess With Me; If Dreams Come True; There's A Small Hotel; Hallelujah! Jake Porter (t); Bumps Myers (ts); Powell (p); Red Callender (b); Lee Young (d).*

**Recorded: Los Angeles, 31 December 1947.**  
*Cuban Pete; Cookin' One Up; That Old Black Magic; When A Woman Loves A Man.*  
**Frank Beach (t); Myers (ts); Chuck Gentry (bs); Powell (p); Callender (b); Young (d).**

**Recorded: Los Angeles, 28 September 1948.**  
*Muskrat Rumble.*  
**Clyde Hurley (t); Lou McGarity (tb); Gus Bivona (cl); Don Lodice (ts); Powell (p); Tiny Berman (b); Frankie Carlson (d).**

USUALLY LED by Powell, the Uptown Gang was drawn from the more jazz-inclined members of Glenn Miller's large American Band of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and it made a lot of rather casual, poorly documented recordings. Some, done in Paris the same year as the above, with Django Reinhardt sitting in, appeared on Esquire in the late 1970s. Phonastic's selection comes from broadcasts to American Forces personnel while the Miller outfit was stationed in England, probably at Bedford. The sound quality is unsatisfactory, but the number of Powell recordings was never commensurate with his talent, so these discoveries are of some importance. More work needs to be done on the personnels, and perhaps on the dates. Discographical details are given above as they appear on the sleeve, yet in fact the instrumentation varies considerably. The trombonist, whom I do not believe to be Miller, is on a few tracks only. Privin on some more, a bass clarinet in addition to Hucko's instrument is heard in "Shandy", and Junior Collins's french horn features on "Night In Tunisia".

Unlike on the Paris recordings, where Privin's and Hucko's direct and muscular playing took the lead, Powell dominates, and the sustained brilliance of his playing, for example in "The Earl," indicates what jazz lost when he went off to Yale to study with Hindemith. Though necessarily brief, his improvisations here are often complex yet maintain resolute clarity and are delivered with absolute decisiveness: quite apart from the musical invention it embodies, such playing is a constant source of pleasure. Hucko is the other most frequent soloist and is at his Goodmanish best on, for instance, "Lady, Be Good" and "Makin' Whoopee". Privin's presence

alters the balance of the group and the music often takes on more of a dixieland accent, although he is commandingly fluent also in "Triple X", an interesting theme of Powell's. An apparent surprise, however, in 1944, is the inclusion of "Night In Tunisia", which Gillespie himself only recorded with Boyd Raeburn's band in 1945 (Musicraft MV5505). Powell's own proto-bopish "Red Light" on Esquire should be remembered, though, and his progressive sympathies are confirmed by several aspects of the Pausa LP.

This latter material was initially taken down by Capitol, but I gather from Shirley Klett (IAJRC Journal, July 1985) that only "Cuban Pete" has ever been on LP before, and "You Better Not Mess With Me" and "If Dreams Come True" have not been issued before. This music is more thoughtfully elaborated, more consistently exploratory, than the 1944 items, and it is quite an experience to hear some of these pieces for the first time several decades after the event. Try the strikingly original pianistic treatments of "Anything Goes" and "If Dreams Come True". This "Way Down Yonder", which now has an almost Tatumesque introduction, is much superior to the Phontastic version, and "Black Magic" is approached in a pleasingly oblique manner. From the quintet and sextet dates respectively, "You Go To My Head" and "When A Woman Loves A Man" are unaccompanied solos marked by sensitive introspection. There is good work from Myers, as on the especially attractive "Cuban Pete", but Powell's brilliance drives all before it, dominating each performance as by right.

Max Harrison

## MARILYN CRISPELL/DOUG JAMES

**And Your Ivory Voice Sings (Leo Records LR 126)**

**Recorded: Woodstock, NY, 7, 8, 9 March 1985.**

*Element Air... Leap; Opium Dream Eyes; Minstrels; On And Off The Beaten Track; Song For Jeanne Lee; And Your Ivory Voice Sings; After The Rain.*  
**Marilyn Crispell (p); Doug James (d).**

TO SAY that Marilyn Crispell's records do her scant justice would be to understate the case. When I saw her play twelve concerts with The Anthony Braxton Quartet last November, her talent was a revelation: she has a phenomenal technique that ranges from breathtaking speed and attack to hair-trigger sensitivity, and she seems at home in all kinds of music – presumably the gift of a catholic sensibility whose inspirations include such diverse talents as Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Bach and Jimi Hendrix. In comparison, *Spirit Music and Live In Berlin*, the two albums by her own (ex)group, are disappointing, their energies diffuse and ill-focused.

Her solo LPs are much better (if, at first hearing, rather formidable): FMP's *A Concert In Berlin* and her previous Leo release, *Rhythms Hung In Undrawn Sky*, contain some of the freshest, fiercest, boldest piano music of the 80s, and it is to

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this camp that her new LP also belongs.

*And Your Ivory Voice Sings* is a duo record, which I find a mixed blessing. While the presence of drummer Doug James definitely helps the dancing-in-the-air feel of tracks like "Minstrels" and the jaunty "On And Off The Beaten Track", his constant percussive chatter also makes things too busy at times – there's less of the subtle deployment of silence/space which gave *Rhythms Hung In Undrawn Sky* much of its dramatic, intimate character. Also Crispell herself is such a brilliantly percussive player, actual percussion often seems superfluous, especially as the tendency here is for the musicians to reinforce each other rather than play against one another.

Still, this quibble aside, *And Your Ivory Voice Sings* is a very strong record. Crispell is a hard, fast player, probably the most physical pianist since Cecil Taylor and certainly the most exciting. Her clarity and precision at speed are astonishing, comparable even to her mentor's; but though Taylor has been a major influence – the title-track here is dedicated to him – Crispell's own ivory voice is growing ever more distinctive and original. The sheer rushing exhilaration of tracks like "Minstrels" or "Ivory Voice" may recall Taylor's awesome abilities, but these are airy songs, vivacious and mercurial, far from a different consciousness entirely to the one behind his typically torrential roars.

The record closes with John Coltrane's "After The Rain", currently a Crispell favourite and perhaps her best recorded performance to date. Coltrane too was a vital influence on her musical development, and this "After The Rain" is not simply a tribute, but exemplifies Coltrane's own kind of spiritual questing. She gets right to the heart of the music, hammering at its secrets, moving through frantic turmoil to a final, accepting peace. James' support meshes sympathetically here, and Crispell demonstrates she is as much a mistress of delicacy as of crashing turbulence.

Good as this record is, I suspect the best of Marilyn Crispell is still to come, assuming she is given the time and space to find it. It's ironic that four of her five records are on European labels and that she finds gigs so scarce at home she has to work in a restaurant to make ends meet – just like Cecil Taylor did in the 60s. How sad and stupid that America creates such great artists, only to treat them with such profound disrespect.

Graham Lock

## PAT THOMAS

**Asanteman**

(JAP 0101)

Recorded: Lome Togo, 1985.

*Asanteman; Owu Do Ma*

*Me; Odo A Me Do Yi; Mesan*

*Mako Mekyir.*

Pat Thomas (v, perc); Mike

Nielson (sax); Sam Torto

(tb); Laryea (t); Marshall

(bg); Frank Donkor (rhythm

g); Aweke (lead g); Chris

Marsac (solo g); Asie Dee

(d); Seth Otinkorang

(congas); Abbe Mensah

(kbs, perc).

## M'BILIA BEL

**Boya Ye**

(Sterns 1012)

Recorded: Studio Johanna,

Paris, 1985.

*Boya Ye; Maeta Vi; Shawuri*

*Yako; Tonton Skoll.*

M'Bilia Bel (v); Tabu Ley's

Orchestra Afrisa (personnel

not given).

## GASPER LAWAL

**Abio'sunni**

(Hot Cap 1)

Recorded: Mark Angelo

Studios, London, 1985.

*Kokoroko; Witch-Dance;*

*Omi Leniyon; Abio'sunni;*

*Kai Anibaba; Ija Oyewa.*

Gasper Lawal (Talking d,

egun d, marimba, conga,

perc inc mouth and throat

perc, v); Olalekan Babalola

(conga, fish d, egun d, breast

d, kabasa, Agba d, agogo,

atumpani d, v); plus 31

supporting players and

vocalists.

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**The Indestructible Beat Of**

**Soweto**

(Earthworks EMW 5502)

Recorded: Various, South

Africa, 1981–84.

Udokotela Shange

Namajaha; Awungilobolele;

Nelcy Sedibe; Holotlani;

Umalathini Nabo; Ohude

Manikini; Amaswazi

Emvelo; Indoda Yejazi

Elimnyama; Mahlatini

Nezintombi Zomqashiso

with Makgona Tshole Band;

Emthongeni Womculo;

Udokotela Shange

Namajaha; Sobabamba;

Moses Mehunu;

Ohwahlahle; Amaswazi

Emvelo; Thut'ubalele;

Nganeziyafisa no

Khambalomveliso; Sini

Lindle; Mahlatini

Nezintombi Zomqashiso

with Makgona Tshole Band;

Ngicabange Ngagada;

Johnson Mkhaleli; Joyce

No. 2; Ladysmith Black

Mambazo; Nansi Imali.

AT THE beginning to at least one song on

each of these very different LPs, this

occurs: a brief 'authentic' intro, where

some traditional instrument wails or

jangles in its own rhythm until the

'modern' beat starts up, bursts in. The

immense tension between change and

tradition is being productively explored

right across Africa in its popular music –

in some ways there is no other subject – with

a duty to the vast and undervalued past but

a duty also to the endless innovations

(rightly) traced back through Latin and

Caribbean and American black music to

roots in Africa, it seems that it can only be

true to itself by going in all directions at

once. And like jazz, its unity is a matter of

hope and convention mixed, and not much

more at the moment.

Pat Thomas' Asanteman opens with the

husky honk of what might as well be a conch-shell fanfare, before kicking into a typically charged Highlife rhythm. Highlife in Ghana isn't at present a centre of wild stylistic innovation, but its senior operators – Thomas is one – have been working tough emotions into its rotund guitar sound for a while now: with the sourest sour horns, Thomas' own matter-of-fact voice, touched but not shattered, you might say it, and the pumping beat (a kind of headlong gallop, with occasional reins hauled right in, the rhythm breaking, taking breath, hold it, and whompity back into full stride, momentum renewed). Asanteman is a brief history of the Ashanti Kingdom, taking up the whole of side one, a subject of more ambitious scope than is generally tackled; and this is not complex music either, songs generally falling in round alternation of two chords, and sustained over the longer reaches by the heller-skelter dance-beat in part, but by something more full-throated and subtle as well. A practical pleasure, a plain man's release: Highlife would make no greater claims than these at present, but in its wry way probably transcends them.

When it comes to soulful, the only "traditional" element still available is the voice, and M'Bilia Bel opens "Maeta Vi" with an absent-minded sweet warble, it's a music that lives in a confusing half-world, between the night-clubs of Kinshasa and Paris. Tabu Ley's stage shows are basically step-perfect soul-reviews, and Bel is his vivacious dancer-wife in that context, with an appeal much to do with her plumply sensuous solidity. But in his music she takes on a strangely otherworldly voice, keening angles and abstraction, and the music dancing round her. On the whole, the automatic doubt that used to attach itself to a night-club singer/dancer (is this or isn't it the full extent of her employment here?) has become part of an unimpaired part – of the lost glamour of jazz. No one's going to confuse Sade with the topless hostess, these days. But in the songs and in the shows, it's hard not to get caught up in the swirl of submission and refusal in Bel's act, courting and ignoring some kind of exotic Parisian sex-chic. He would be staid and tired without her, but isn't entirely in control of her, by virtue of her extraordinary voice: they make an oddly touching couple when they dance together. The music, which is crafted for night-club allure, after all, catches at something more, and catches something of that particular danger as well: and with it, from her, a perfectly guileless openness: "No, no, no, I won't be fooled again..."

Nigeria has become centre for a drive into the future based round the drum orchestras and master percussionists. Sunny Ade has fashioned Juju into a stylistic forcing house. In a kind of parallel development, Gasper Lawal has been quietly working away at his own innovations. His first release, *Ajomase*, was far more varied than this, weirdly juxtaposed and unmatched elements shuffled together to some effect. This is harder, darker, denser, focused much more tightly round the massed drums themselves. He has a fondness for half-buried riffs, the kind of construction you find yourself humming without knowing you knew it: but actually none of the melodies, in riff or in solo, is as important

for itself as for its place in the mesh of rhythm (though not in the way this would be true of Juju, which reduces everything to rhythm, and then proceeds to organize melody out of it). The purpose, so it seems, of instrumental colour in his pieces, is to jerk odd little turns out of the sound, a tentative jabbing of guitar in "Kai Anibaba", the spiralling diving flutes in "Om! Leniyon", an almost shapeless violin flapping briefly across "Abio'sunni": and most intriguing of all, for the future, the throbbing hum of the synthesizer in "Ija Oyewa". I'll return to Ayomase for lighter surprises: Abio'sunni offers more peculiar strengths.

If, as is sometimes supposed, great music only comes out of great pain, then Township Jive and Mbaqanga would have to be great music. If, as is also claimed, great music reflected pain, then they'd be impossible to listen to. But of course, neither of these suggestions ring true in the real world. South Africa's black pop music is made under intolerable conditions, and would have to carry emotions that no music has ever really carried, if this was how things were to be explained. In fact, this rich and simple sound takes much of its appeal from the way it deflects and transforms (or even ignores) the appalling daily pressure, a music grown up in company of tiny victories and endless defeat, and bitterly painful mobilization: escape and struggle are inextricably wound into each other in its voice, and the way we have to hear it. A lumpy and winding bare bones of a music, with fiddles and accordions, or acapella voices, or crinkling guitars, hardly daring to sketch in more than tenge emotions – measure of the crushingly narrow horizons allowed the musicians – and what you sense is that most things go unsaid, even in as allusive or coded a style as this.

The extreme simplicity of the blues song – born in the end of similar conditions – was hijacked to no useful end by the white pop market, and the papsoul that blocks up SA black radio and TV channels is mostly of a similarly lamentable idiocy. This music has to be picked out of that. It isn't the greatest music being made: an utterly vicious state ensures that. But it's affecting and challenging in its own way, for pure relaxation into pleasure (the singing on "Nansi Imali"), for uncluttered intensity ("Motetelani"), for impossibly wiry toughness.

Mark Sinker

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Sun Records: The Blues Years 1950–1956**

(Sun Box 105)

**Recorded: Memphis, 1950–1956.**

**Tracks by:** *Lost John Hunter, Joe Hill Louis, Charlie Borse, Sleepy John Estes, Howling Wolf, B.B. King, Jackie Brenston, Lou Sargent, L.J. Thomas, Rosco Gordon, Rufus Thomas, Walter Smith, Johnny London, Handy Cannon, Big Memphis Ma Rainey, Little Junior's Blue Flames, William Stewart, The Prisonaires, Hunkie Dori, The*

*Brewsteraires, The Southern Jubilees, The Jones Brothers, Doctor Ross, Henry Hill, Sammy Lewis & Willie Johnson, Walter Horton, Jack Kelly, Jimmy DeBerry, Willie Nix, L.B. Lawson, Honey Boy Edwards, Albert Williams, Joe Hill Louis, Mose Vinson, D.A. Hunt, Earl Hooker, Boyz Gilmore, Charlie Booker, Walter Bradford, James Cotton, Pat Hara, Hot Shot Love, James Banister, Dennis Binder, Raymond Hill, Tot Randolph, Johnny O'Neal, Little Milton, Houston Boines, Billy Love, Billy Emerson, Eddie Snow.*

**AH, YES** – the blues. Out of all these Wire musics, the blues looks the most beleaguered. Smitten by the occasional revival, plundered and dressed down by several generations of rockers, geriatric as a living form in its own territories: maybe this is all the blues has left, compilations called *The Blues Years*, as if it were just another period in somebody's musical history: now past.

Pardon my musing, for there's little to do as far as hard criticism goes with a set as expansively put together as this one. It collects 151 tracks recorded by Sam Phillips in his celebrated Sun studio: 59 were issued at the time, 41 subsequently appeared on other LPs (many as part of Charly's superb and now deleted *Sun Story* series) and 51 are completely new. They're spread across nine packed LPs, each receiving its own liner sleeve with detailed notes on every performance. All this, plus another booklet of biographies, discographies and rare photos, in a big blue box for around 40 quid. The music starts with some prehistoric-sounding boogie from Lost John Hunter and winds up with that great rockin' minimalist Rosco Gordon. Along the way are the practitioners you see listed above. This mystery train takes a very long, lonesome ride.

What kind of blues did Sam Phillips set out to record? The musicians who made these records in Memphis, Tennessee seem to have been a mixture of local players – like Willie Nix, Sammy Lewis and John Hunter – and Mississippi and Tennessee blacks who came to what was one of the central migration points of the South. An interview with Phillips in the booklet is informative without revealing much about his motives for recording and releasing some sessions and discarding others.

Exposure to these sides, though, suggests a search for a certain supernatural wall in the blues. When a side was too amiable, too dependent on form – no matter how lively – Phillips was frequently dissatisfied. In a sense, although most of the music here has an urban crunch to it that toughens even the rural derivations, the Sun blues 'sound' wasn't a matter of sonics. At its most essential, the music's spark came either from sheer cussedness or a stark hint of madness.

The most notorious example here is Pat Hara's eerie "I'm Gonna Murder My Baby". A gentle man with a broken voice, Hara's

music exists on the plane of his wracked, vicious guitar style, an inch away from complete distortion. The savage twist is that Hara actually went on to do what the song says. Hara is also here with James Cotton in "Cotton Crop Blues", lashing together the singer's theme – rooted in pre-war country blues – with a stifled guitar wall. On tracks like that, of textual and musical value alike, the Sun legacy is vital. But some idea of the consistency here can be gleaned from Cotton's other tracks, which are rather plain blues bounces.

If the set has a central weakness, it's that so many of the tracks seem like makeweight items – worth hearing, worth saving but scarcely significant matters for a casual blues follower. It's hard to get much out of Jimmy DeBerry, Mose Vinson, Walter Bradford or Johnny O'Neal. Hard blues content is dissipated by eccentricity: some ersatz sax rockers, a bit of jump band boogie and downright weird throwbacks, Big Memphis Ma Rainey (alias Little Mae Glover), as her name suggests, is a kind of updated classic blues stylist; there are Walter Horton harp workouts (including one tremendous record in "Easy") which recall Will Shade's tradition; and the dusty Mississippi memories of Doctor Ross, rural blues in city smoke. Even Sleepy John Estes turned up to record a few (fairly unremarkable) numbers.

This is the problem with anthologizing one label (or, rather, one studio – several tracks were licensed out to R&B labels like Chess and RPM). Phillips recorded plenty of second-division material, like everyone else, in the search for the greatest music. For everything of the quality of, say, Little Junior's "Love My Baby" here, there are three or four honourable but unambitious plays on twelve bars. And the limitations of the blues impel personal taste to sway judgements more decisively than usual. Billy Love and Billy "The Kid" Emerson, both generously represented, are good bluesmen who leave me quite cold. Although there are plenty of threads to follow, this is more the preserve of blues scholars.

If you wanted a general cross-section of these powerful "blues years", it would probably be better to pick up eight or nine separate anthologies. But, all this said, I can't imagine anyone buying this set and actively regretting it, for over the 18 sides there is plenty of great blues. The sour, detached music of Willie Nix; Junior Parker's four perfect blues, driving and reflective at once; an obscure and excellent side of gospel, dominated by The Southern Jubilees and their magnificent "There's A Man In Jerusalem"; Pat Hara and Rosco Gordon; a few unknown pleasures, like the guitar daggers of Honey Boy Edwards; and a whole side of Little Milton. Milton's mimetic gift – he had a voice that could be heavy with fatigue or light and tender, and he could take off popular styles one by one – means that his portion is almost a Sun catalogue by itself.

And, of course, Phillips recorded Howling Wolf. There are eight pieces of the Wolf here. All have some sort of flaw, like the man omitting to tell the band what he was going to do; but when he puts his mouth to the microphone, Sun rocks.

Richard Cook

**JIM JEWELL QUINTET: Dawn Of The Dragon (cassette).** This fine, swinging tape-only set is a great Walkman favourite round here. Tenorman Jewell leads his band through a programme of purposeful originals in a hard bop style that's comfortable without surrendering to pure formula – the teetering "Kodo", wistful "Billie" and hungry title tune are especially attractive. The leader's meaty tone and unhurried pacing work in close tandem with the more venturesome excitements offered by trumpeter Chris Albert – he has a touch of Kenny Dorham's silvery sting. Workpersonlike support from Chris Goleksmith, Erica Howard and Hughie Flint. Obtainable in the London jazz shops or send £5 to Jim at 19 Folkestone Road, London E17.

**WILBUR HARDEN/JOHN COLTRANE: Gold Coast (Savoy WL 70518), 1958–59.** Coltrane, affirmatively quizzing, but the figure to focus on in this sextet LP is Harden. He played on only a few jazz dates, a veteran R&B trumpeter before a debilitating illness, and though overshadowed by Trane's usual hugeness he gets off some spottily adventurous playing. He wrote strangle, stuttering tunes like "Dial Africa" – his delicacy there is like a hoodlum trying to curtsy. Coltrane barrels in, oblivious, and then an all-at-sea Curtis Fuller tries to pick up the pieces. Thus does the music proceed. It's pretty

odd.

**MAARTEN ALTENA QUARTET: Rondedans (Claxon 85.15).** The music on this fourth LP by Altens's quartet (trombone, alto, oboe and bass) hits a confident compromise between the written and the extemporized, although there's only a short order of the latter. They explore rustic harmonies, or juxtapose nutty ideas – like the cracked melodic line stop a whipsawing bass in "Portret Van Enno Verkerk". The muted recording draws off some of the group's presence, and the demon energy in a similar project like Fred Van Hove's KKWT (reviewed Wire 23) is absent, but it's an animated package.

**CHICK COREA: Septet (ECM 1297).** Considering he's such a minor figure, Corea has had remarkable good fortune in getting his music recorded and distributed. The "Septet" is a fluffy, diffuse, rhythmically glib work, so it sticks close to the thrust of his main oeuvre. "I just kept writing until I ran out of time and then composed an ending," he writes, which is pretty much how the music sounds. A pity that those composers featured in, for instance, the Arditti's recent series of concerts don't get such opportunities to document their work.

**WOODY SHAW: Setting Standards (Muse MR5318).** Woody plays trumpet and

flugelhorn on four standards, a blues and a Cedar Walton original, backed by Walton, Buster Williams and Victor Jones. Michael Cuscuna's production plays up to the intimacy of the occasion, with Shaw wreathed in reverberant and bass luxuriantly oiled, but the record is a little too comforting: I prefer the trumpeter when he's got something to rasp at, and he hasn't the wicked wit of, say, Clark Terry at these tempos. "Spiderman Blues", where the pace moves up several notches, gives him something to flare out on.

**KING UBU ORCHESTRA: Music Is Music Is... (Uhlklang UK-6).** ... nine free-men, the savage children of Globe Unity, in two sides of spontaneous moments. This is a particularly clear example of the organic music, a biological lay-out: one side of fragments, where members take turns to drop out, and another with the slow motion rise and fall of one great piece. There are no solo passages, hardly anywhere where even one player steps slightly out, just a texture of continuous viscous flux. But that sound is never muddled, the intention almost piecemeal in its movement, and the results hum with interest. Plus the mix of players – surreptitious romantics like Phil Wachsmann and Radu Malfatti, gremilins like Guido Mazzoni – ensures plenty of needle.

(All reviews by Richard Cook)

Continued from page 33

misunderstood by a music industry that tried to mould her into a commercial pop singer, and unable to find a label willing to deal with her on her terms, she decided to start her own record company. In 1969 Bet-Car Records came into being, and she has since released four LPs on the label: the first two both called *Betty Carter*, then *The Audience With Betty Carter*, and, most recently, *Whatever Happened To Love*, a live album with trio and strings.

There were also, in the mid-70s, three short-lived LPs on the Roulette label. "Oh boy," she sighs, "that's a whole other story. I had to go to court on that one, that was one of my bad times. Somebody stole some tapes and sold 'em to Roulette – that's how they got *Finally* and *Round Midnight*. What Roulette did was offer me some money to do one album, and then tell me later that they had these tapes... you dig? So that's a subject I don't like to talk about. It's kinda heavy."

The record you did with them was *Now It's My Turn*?

"Yeah. But I didn't name it that. I never would have named it that." She pulls one of her sourest faces.

Presumably you prefer to stay with your own label now?

"Well, nobody's jumping over themselves to ask me to record for them; Columbia's not after me, Warner Brothers aren't after me. And they won't be unless they find a producer to produce me, and that's almost impossible 'cause everybody's younger than I am," she

chuckles. "So how they gonna tell me what to do?"

**OVER** The last 15 years, the Betty Carter Trio has acquired a reputation as a training ground for young musicians. John Hicks, Curtis Lundy and Kenny Washington are three examples of Carter alumni who have since made names for themselves. Her current trio – Benny Green (piano), Tarik Shah (bass), Winard Harper (drums) – are both very good and very young, just 22, 23 years old: so is it a deliberate ploy of hers to hire young musicians and train them?

"Pretty much. The older musicians don't have the energy I like, and they're not adventurous. Younger musicians... well, they might make a mistake, but it might be a good one. You can learn a lot from good mistakes."

And although Carter feels her own music has now gone beyond her bebop roots to a more personal – and contemporary – plane, she still maintains that Charlie Parker's music is the best foundation for a musical education: you have to learn the tunes and the changes, she says, and is bitterly scathing about the musics of the 60s and 70s – fusion, modal and Free.

"When we got into Free music, musicianship went down the tubes. That's why Archie Shepp is now trying to play tunes," she laughs. "Really, it's as simple as that. See, he started our playing Free, now he's trying to play a melody or two. But it's harder now, 'cause he put the cart before the horse. You should learn from the very beginning, when you're young, because when you get to 35, 40, who wants to practise?"

This seems a little hard on Mr Shepp, who, after all, was playing Ellington ballads in the mid-60s; however, I have other arguments I wish to pursue.

The men in your songs, I say, trying to sound nonchalant, they're nearly all unfaithful or very fickle.

"Oh no," she protests, "you haven't listened to my whole repertoire. You're just thinking of that one tune, 'Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love', right? I didn't write that, Cole Porter wrote that in the 30s; it's just a funny song, to make people laugh – don't take it seriously. I mean, if I sing 'Most gentlemen, they don't like love, they just like to kick it around' – well, if the shoe fits...," she grins, "that's your problem."

**LATER** That night...

It's dark in the club. A single, pencil-thin spotlight shines down on the floor where Betty Carter is stalking to and fro in front of her trio.

"Most gentlemen, they can't take love," she sings, "cause most gentlemen can't be profound."

Some syllables she draws out, rolling them around her tongue, others she snaps short. The phrasing, the timing, are immaculate. The very air tingles.

She's into the mid-song rap.

"So if your boyfriend, some fine night, should say, I'll love you forever and part from you never, now ladies, it's your turn – kick him."

A female voice at the back whoops approval.

Carter laughs, and looks along the line of front tables. Her eyes meet mine.

"See," she yells to me, "the aggressive woman is in!"

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1. Ran Blake; Camden on Camera; Eric Dolphy; Steve Lacy; Harold Land, Leo Records; Wynton Marsalis; Art Pepper tribute; Max Roach; Scatting & Bopping; Seven Steps to Jazz - Trumpet, John Stevens Part I; Women Live

8. Cadillac Records; Coltrane's A Love Supreme; Count Basie tribute: Ted Curson, Miles Davis concert, Festivals - Moers and Le Mans; Barry Guy, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Metalanguage; Michel Petrucci; Seven Steps - Bass

9. Art Ensemble of Chicago; Benny Carter; Charly RAB; Andrew Cyrille; Manu Dibango, Teo Macero; Meredith Monk; Phil Murphy; Oliver Nelson's The Blues and the Abstract Truth; Recording Improvised Music; Trevor Watts' More Music; Where Were You In '52?

10. Alterations, Armstrong's West End Blues; Ann Baraka, Black Masks, White Masks, Art Blakey; Doretto Magnus; Jazz At The Phil reviews; Hugh Masekela, Thelma Houston; Monk; Jerry Westler

12. Afro Jazz; Laurie Anderson; Gone But Not Forgotten - Vic Dickenson, Dennis Rose, Colin Walcott; Chris McGregor; Phil Minton-Roger Turner, New Year's Honours List, New York Ear & Eye - Gospel, Me Laney, Cecil Taylor; Max Roach's We Insist! Freedom Now Suite

14. Arts Council; Harry Becker; British Summer Time Ends; Kenny Clarke tribute; Graham Collier; Free Music Overview; Hip London Scene; Inqui Festival; Jazz Funding; London Venues; Evan Parker's Saxophone Solos, Round The Regions; John Surman; Mike Westbrook; Where Guide - Manchester, Anne Whitehead

15. Derek Bailey; Marthe & Fontela Bass; George Benson; Essiebel Coltrane, Charles Mingus - Pithecanthropus Erectus; Pat Metheny; Jim Mullen; Norme Winstone

16. Anthony Braxton; Cotton Club; Peter King; Onyeka; Essential Dolphy; Incus Festival, Zoot Sims; Gil Scott-Heron, Clifford Brown & Max Roach

17. Ray Charles; John Gilmore; Herbie Nichols; Daniel Ponce, Jazz in Paris; Betty Boop; Paladini; Afro-Jazz

18. Sonny Rollins; Bobby McFerrin; Jayne Cortez; Stanley Jordan; Tommy Chase; Bertrand Tavernier; Joe Ferrell (groat issue!)

19. Ornette Coleman; Charles Haden; Steve Lacy; Boyd Rice; Slim Gallard; Movie Jazz; Peter Lind; Urban Sax

20. Art Blakey; Wynton & Branford Marsalis; Bobby Watson; Hank Mobley; Ganein Trio; Bob Biederbeck; Impulse & Blue Note reissues

21. Chat Baker; Cuba; Jannaladeen Tacuma; Michael Nyman; Duke Ellington, Pinski Zoo; Man Wilson

22. John Coltrane; Ruben Blades; Nathan Davis; James Blood Ulmer; Depravity; Guest Stars

23. Bill Laswell; Anita O'Day; Charlie Watts; Loose Tubes; Celia Cruz; Mathilde Santing; Lester Bowie; Donald Banks; Arto Lindsay

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URBAN JAZZ BY CHRIS MACKENZIE



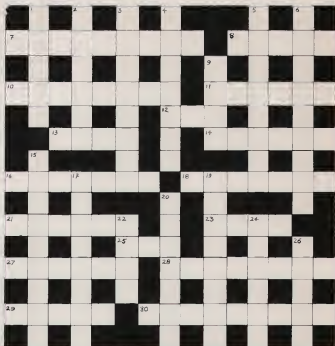
## JAZZWORD

Compiled by Tim Colwell

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

## ACROSS

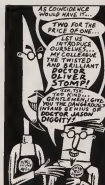
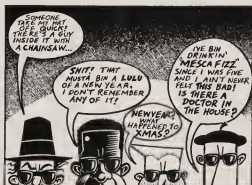
- 7 and 17 down. Don riled a randy elk!  
When carnage sorted out, two old-time  
hornmen emerge. (3,3,3,3,5)
- 8 Either way the note's the same! (5)
- 10 Cease temporal activity? Oft done in  
jazz choruses. (4-4)
- 11 Adam's second son in London  
Symphony? Altogether they sometimes  
have sticky backsides. (6)
- 12 Trombonist known to be big...  
somewhat shortened here! (3)
- 13 Well-known composer who never  
collects Royalties! (4)
- 14 Collective transport. (A particular one is  
known to jazzers.) (5)
- 16 Strays' diaphragm! (7)
- 18 John Sellers, for example... or  
Montgomery? (7)
- 21 Wet doe shakes into bop opus. (3,3)
- 23 See 9 down.
- 25 The answer is 'Oxo'. This is entirely  
irrelevant but is a New Year present  
from the author! (3)
- 27 Stratford character? Nearer Harlow, we  
hear, for SA saxist. (6)
- 28 ET is dour! He/she certainly blows off  
the changes! (8)
- 29 Old Dankworth Band number. (5)
- 30 Metaphorically (and ornithologically)  
these sense organs were more  
perceptive than most. (5,4)



- 6 Add pence to Lady's hatter... then you  
might get lucky! (9)
- 9, 23 across and 20 down. Lady cop in  
disguise... or Mr. G's good-time girl  
with the pedal-extremity problems?  
(4,4,7)
- 15 Leader does this if sideman blows the  
gig, maybe. (5,1,3)
- 17 See 7 across.
- 19 Hawk's "Hackensack". (8)
- 20 See 9 down.
- 22 See 3 down.
- 24 Front of Lake, Jackson! (6)
- 26 Tenorist Al's ears good enough for  
Duke in the 40's. (5)

## DOWN

- 1 and 2 Unclean modernist? So some said  
of Bruce. (5,6)
- 3 and 22 Chicago is just the place for  
Frankie-boy, vocally. (2,4,2,4)
- 4 After the first letter, two tens will about  
make a girl. Ostentatious bird, if it helps.  
(7)
- 5 Large charge from Kenton? (7) Brass!  
(3,5)





# THE WRITE PLACE

## FUSION CONFUSION

I REFER to your reviewer Mark Sinker whose reviews of The Breakfast Band/PAZ/Dub System were a waste of printers' ink and my time in reading them. Please do not allow people to review music when it is obvious that they do not like the type of music they are writing about. There was no way we were going to get a balanced account of these!

**Peter Webb, Canterbury**

Mark liked both the PAZ and the Dub System LPs and he seems to have said so in the review. He didn't like The Breakfast Band. Seems fairly balanced to me — Ed.

## A GUITARIST WRITES

PLEASE EXCUSE me but I couldn't let Steve Lake's review of Skeleton Crew go without comment, raising as it did some ugly spectres of the past.

Steve always struck me as something of a boring old twaddler. No doubt he for his part took me for a pretentious fake, if I read

him correctly. As to whether either of us is right — who could possibly tell and who cares? However, I'm sad to see such resignation and cynicism creep into the writing of someone who, in print, at least, was usually alert, open-minded and enthusiastic.

Whatever the reason for this I refuse to allow him to represent me without challenge as embittered or an avant gardist (chips on both shoulders). And whatever his opinions of our music, to which he is after all entitled, I find it demeaning of him to so patronizingly dismiss the Munich audience. Does he have a monopoly on the knowledge of what's truly adventurous? And how come he's so convinced we're trying to shock people or that our frame of reference is all his favourite icons from the late 60s?

Things have changed, Steve. The audiences have changed, the music has changed, the world's changed. I've changed. I aim to continue to do so, and if I do it will be because my experience of music making in all its forms, and because of the context and spirit in which I and

many others work — a context and spirit from which you seem utterly divorced.

I have no grudges — why should I have? In an era of massive and increasing unemployment I've made a pretty good living playing music all over the world for nearly fifteen years. In the process I've been lucky enough to work with some of my favourite musicians and through all kinds of diverse experiences and comradeships, to renew my energy and commitment over and over again. And it ain't stopped yet. In fact I feel better than ever about what I'm doing and new challenges are always presenting themselves.

Just wanted to get that off my chest because I play so seldom in Britain that almost my only contact with the British is via reviews like Steve's. Maybe that explains why there are no pigs. Oh well, I'll try and be optimistic about that too.

Anyway, the struggle for a just and unhungry world is more important than any of this bullshit.

**Fred Frith, New York**

## PLAYLIST

**STRAIGHT NO CHASER** (NME Tape)  
**WYNTON MARSALIS** Black Codes (CBS)  
**JOHN COLTRANE** Coltrane (Impulse)  
**JOHN COLTRANE** Giant Steps (Atlantic)  
**JESUS & MARY CHAIN** Psychocandy (WEA)  
**MILES DAVIS** Sorcerer (CBS)  
**PREFAB SPROUT** Steven McQueen (CBS)  
**CECIL TAYLOR** Unit Structures (Blue Note)  
**WAYNE SHORTER** The Soothsayer (Blue Note)  
**SONNY ROLLINS** East Broadway Rundown (Impulse)

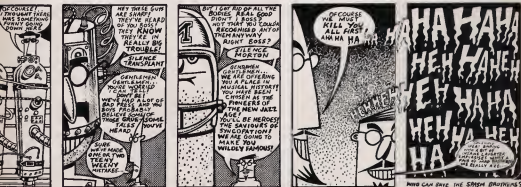
**YOUSOU NDOUR** Bitim Rew  
**PAUL MOTIAN TRIO** Dance (ECM)  
**MOHOLEO/TABBINS/TIPPETT** Tern (Saj)  
**CARLA BLEY & JCOA** Escalator Over The Hill (ECM)  
**TALKING HEADS** Little Creatures (WEA)  
**DEWEY REDMAN & ED BLACKWELL** In Willissau (Black Saint)  
**SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK** We All Every One Of Us  
**JORGE BEN A** Tabua De Esmeralda  
**JOHN SURMAN** Westering Home (Deram)

**BUD POWELL** The Genius of (Verve)  
**MILES DAVIS** Kind of Blue (CBS)  
**GLENN BRANCA** Symphony No. 3 (Gloria)  
**BURNING SPEAR** Reggae Greats (Island)  
**JAN GARBAREK GROUP** Wayfarer (ECM)  
**NEVILLE BROTHERS** Neville Izzation (Subterranean)  
**AL GREEN** Going Away (A & M)  
**EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN** ½ Mensch (Some Bizarre)  
**CHARLIE HADEN** Liberation Music Orchestra (Probe)

Michael Black, Falkirk

Graham Goodfellow

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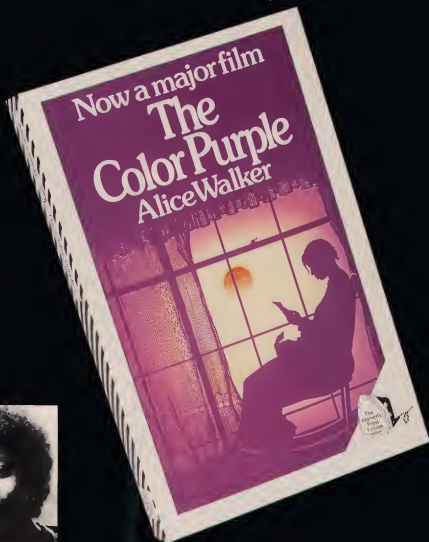


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